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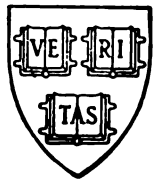

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LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

GEORGE CABOT.

BY

HENRY CABOT LODGE.

BOSTON:
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.
1877.

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CAMBRIDGE:
PRESS OF JOHN WILSON AND SON.

TO

MY MOTHER,

THIS MEMOIR OF HER GRANDFATHER IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

H. C. L.

PREFACE.

A SENTIMENT of respect for the memory of my great-grandfather, and a desire to rescue his name if possible from complete oblivion, induced me to undertake the work of which this volume is the result. The difficulties in my way at first seemed insurmountable. Mr. Cabot, shortly before his death, made an almost complete destruction of all his letters and papers; and I had, therefore, no material for a biography in the best sense of the word. Mr. Cabot's correspondents, however, had preserved his letters; and examination led me to believe that they were of considerable historical value. Selections from these letters form the principal part of this volume. Being debarred by the nature of my only materials from writing a suitable biography, and not considering that a history of any period could be properly treated in a work relating exclusively to an individual, I was forced to confine myself to the task of simply editing those letters which seemed to merit publication. With this object, I have prefixed to each chapter a short account of Mr. Cabot's public life, and of such events as happened during the period covered by the letters and alluded to in them. These introductory passages and the notes as well have been written with the sole purpose of rendering the accompanying letters intelligible.

Only once have I exceeded the bounds which I prescribed to myself, and that is in regard to the Hartford Convention. The life of the President of that once famous body seemed to me a fit place and a sufficient excuse for tracing its history in some detail, and I was still further encouraged to do this by the abundance of new material offered to me in the Pickering MSS. and by the letters of Governor Strong. I must confess that my single excursion beyond the editorial paling has been a protracted one, but I hope it will not be deemed either unjustifiable or wholly useless.

I have endeavored throughout to be scrupulously accurate and fair in all my statements, but I have not sought in treating New England Federalism to write a judicial and impartial history of the country. My object was to present one side, and that the Federalist, in the strongest and clearest light. I wished to give as vivid a picture as I could of the opinions and feelings of those men among whom Mr. Cabot was prominent. To do this, I have been obliged to trace the actions and policy of the Democratic party and of its famous leader, in order to show how they appeared to the Federalists. To the feelings of the latter toward their opponents, I am conscious that I have done but scant justice, and that they would deem my version of their opinions a feeble reproduction: but neither sympathy nor intention, however genuine, can now revive on paper in all its force the intense party spirit of seventy-five years ago. Unfortunately, the path of New England Federalism lies over many battlefields beside those fought with its legitimate and natural enemies. Its fiercest struggles were within its own ranks, and the feuds of 1798–1800 were never wholly at rest except in the grave of the party itself. I have striven to be impartial in dealing with

these controversies, and I have wished to award to both sides their fair share of blame or praise.

I ought to say here a few words in regard to the letters, and the sources from which some of them have been drawn. Nearly all of those addressed to Hamilton have been printed before in his works, and a large proportion of those to Wolcott have appeared in Gibbs's "Administrations of Washington and Adams." A small number also of those to Colonel Pickering have appeared in his Life by Mr. Upham. All the others are, with hardly an exception, now published for the first time. I have printed every thing which seemed to me of any historical value; and I have given the letters exactly as they were written, without any alteration, and without the suppression of any passage, except in the case of a single paragraph too personal in its nature to warrant publication. I ought to add that this omitted paragraph did not occur in a letter written by Mr. Cabot.

All the letters to or from Colonel Pickering, except those to Governor Strong, are taken from the Pickering papers, now in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society; and those to and from Wolcott, from the Wolcott MSS., in the custody of the Historical Society of Connecticut. The Hamilton and Washington letters are among the national archives, but all the rest are in my possession or in that of other private individuals.

In the matter of references, I have tried to be as sparing as possible, and have cited chapter and verse only for literal quotations, or for the support of statements requiring the fullest proof. For those general facts which can be easily verified by referring to the State Papers or the Annals of Congress, I have not deemed it necessary, in a work of this nature, to give elaborate authorities.

I have now only to return thanks for the many kindnesses which I have received. I am especially indebted to my friend, Professor HENRY ADAMS, for many suggestions and for much valuable aid. To HENRY LEE, Esq., I am under many obligations for the most unwearied assistance and for much encouragement, and to Dr. EDWARD STRONG I owe a special debt for the generous kindness with which he placed the correspondence of his grandfather at my disposal. To thank individually the many others who have helped me so readily and in so many ways would unreasonably lengthen an already long preface; and I must ask them, therefore, to accept my acknowledgments collectively, and to be assured of my sincere gratitude. I trust the result is not wholly undeserving of the interest so kindly shown by many persons in the undertaking; but I shall, for my own part, be satisfied if I have made a slight contribution to the history of my country.

HENRY CABOT LODGE.

EAST POINT, NAHANT, June, 1877.

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THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF GEORGE CABOT.

CHAPTER I.

1751–1775.

The Name and Family of Cabot. — Birth of George Cabot. — Education. — Leaves Harvard College. — Enters Merchant Service. — Rises to be Captain. — Results of this Experience.

AMONG the names on the "auncient role," given by Stow,[1] of "the chiefe Noblemen & Gentlemen, which came into England with William the Conqueror," is that of Cabot. What became of this adventurer who followed Duke William is unknown: he is a mere name upon an old parchment; the barren list does not even tell the place whence he came. Modern research, however, has traced the numerous branches of the Cabot family back to one stem, which has flourished in the Island of Jersey since a time when the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. It is mere conjecture to connect William's follower with those of like name in the Channel Islands; but the conjecture has the merit of probability, since Normans had possessed the island long before the memorable year A.D. 1066.[2] This occurrence on the "auncient

[1] Chronicle of England, John Stow, London, 1632, p. 107. The original title of the role reads, "Cognomina Conquisitorum Angliæ cum Domino Gulielmo Duce Normanniæ et Conquistore Angliæ."

[2] The Chabot family of Poitou, afterwards so celebrated in French history, is said to have been in Poitou since 1041. The Cabot of the "auncient role" may possibly have been a Poitou Chabot, and one of William's mercenaries; but it is more natural to suppose that he was one of the island race.

role" of the Cabot name is certainly its first historical appearance, and, taken in connection with the remote origin of the Jersey stock, seems to settle the purely Norman extraction of the family.[1]

Many centuries intervened before the world heard of another Cabot. The name first reappears at the time of the great navigators, John and Sebastian. We know the story of the discoveries which made them famous; but, of the men themselves, hardly more has been preserved than of their namesake who followed Duke William into England.

To the connection of John and Sebastian with the discovery of this continent is probably due the claim of descent from them that has been made by American Cabots, but for which there is no sufficient foundation. The only evidence ever adduced in its support has been a chance resemblance in face and feature, an heirloom,[2] or some extremely vague tradi-

The arms of the Poitou Chabots and the Jersey Cabots are almost identical, and they probably had a common origin. See Hoefer's Biographie Univ., art. *Chabot*. The Norman Cabots were of Jersey origin. Their arms differed from those of the Jersey Cabots and the Poitou Chabots, being "argent; three leopards' heads sable." But they are, nevertheless, of the same family; for their arms are found upon the bell of the old church of St. Trinity, in Jersey. See Armorial of Jersey, by J. Bertrand Payne, pp. 23–50.

[1] The following passages illustrate the purity of the Norman race in Jersey. "This identity Jersey preserved almost intact until the commencement of the present century. Laws, habits, and customs have been handed down with astonishing fidelity. The '*clameur de Haro*,' the legacy of Rollo's stern justice, although disregarded and ignored in its first home, is here as potent as ever." "Until comparatively a recent period, little or no alien blood flowed in the veins of the Jersey folk, and in them continued the main features of their nationality; while persecution and tyranny have so far debased the modern inhabitant of Normandy as to leave in him but few traces of his heroic ancestry. The Jersiais are fully aware of the degeneracy of their continental neighbors; for when one of the lower classes would express the *ne plus ultra* of contempt for an antagonist, he sums it up in the significant phrase, 'Tu es Normand.'" "Hardy, abstemious, clever, brave, and warlike the Normans earned for themselves a home on the fair borders of France, where they flourished while all around them was misery and wretchedness. Then it was that Jersey was part and parcel of their domain."—*Armorial of Jersey*, Payne, pp. 11, 12.

[2] The heirloom referred to here is a mourning-ring, over two hundred

tion; while careful investigation has never been able to discover the necessary links in the pedigree. There is only one bond which can be sustained even by reasonable conjecture. The New England family came from Jersey, where there are two parishes still inhabited almost exclusively by Cabots. There can be little doubt that this was the original home of the race, which in numbers and social arrangements is not unlike a Scottish clan. Persons of all classes in the community possessed a common name and common origin, but beyond this there was no relationship among them.[1] The name is found also in France, England, Belgium, and Italy; and this ubiquity, at first sight, seems to contradict the theory of a single stock. But a sure test exists which proves the derivation of the scattered branches from one source. The coat-of-arms of the Jersey family is perfectly defined and well known. The device is three fishes,[2] or, in the Jersey phrase, "three chabots;" and, by this charge upon the coat-of-arms, the origin of those who bore the name in other countries can be determined. The fishes are found crossed with the Rohan arms, when one of that great family married a Chabot of Poitou, and one of the most distinguished branches of the same family is that of Rohan-Chabot.[3] They were borne by an Italian Cardi-

years old, with the name "Sebastian Cabot" engraved upon it. It is now in the possession of the family of the late Mr. C. C. Foster, of Cambridge.

[1] Mr. George E. Waring, in his "Farmer's Vacation," speaks as follows of the Jersey society: "The gentry invariably cultivate their own estates, and indeed one is at a loss to learn where gentry ends and peasantry begins. The best names in the island are borne by the small landholders as well as by the larger, and cousinship links the population into a very compact community." (p. 183.)

[2] A charge corresponding with the family name is known to heraldry as "*armes parlantes*," and is one of the oldest kinds of devices, forming the connecting link between the primitive personal badge and the heraldic bearings with which we are familiar. (Armorial of Jersey, p. 7.) The arms stamped upon this volume are taken partly from a design made for Mr. Samuel Cabot, of Boston, at the close of the last century, and partly from the "Armorial," and Moule's "Heraldry of Fish."

[3] See État Présent de la Noblesse Française. Bachelin de Florenne, art. *Rohan-Chabot*, p. 1601, 4me éd., 1873–1874.

nal of the last century, and they are still preserved unaltered by the family in America.[1] The Cabots, like their northern ancestors, were a wandering race; and, as the little channel island offered no field for advancement, the more adventurous spirits were driven out into the world to seek their fortune. The nationality even of John Cabot, the discoverer, is still uncertain; for modern investigation has cast doubt upon the usually accepted story of his Venetian birth.[2] His course of life and personal characteristics would lead us to suppose him of the island race; and this supposition is converted into certainty by the identity of arms and motto, as borne by the French descendants of the discoverer, with those of the Jersey family.[3] To claim descent from him, however, is quite another matter, and demands much more direct evidence than any yet brought forward by those who in this country lay claim to the honor. For every Cabot to consider himself a descendant of John Cabot, the discoverer, or of Chabot, the Admiral of France and patron of Jacques Cartier, is very much as if every Cameron claimed descent from Lochiel or every Campbell from the Dukes of Argyll. Such relationship is purely theoretical; but it is all to which the New England Cabots are fairly entitled, in regard to those distinguished men who have borne the name in other countries and in past times. If any further and more positive proof were needed on this point, it is amply supplied by the genealogy of the American family, which has been

[1] See État Présent de la Noblesse française, as above, articles *Cabot*, *Chabot*, and *Chabot la Tour*.

[2] Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, Rawdon Brown, 1202–1509, §§ 743 and 753; Life of Sebastian Cabot, Nicholls, London, 1869.

[3] Armorial de Languedoc, L. de la Roque, Tome II. 163. The French Cabots trace their descent from Louis, John Cabot's second son. M. de la Roque says Sebastian died without issue, but gives no proof of this assertion. He also states the Jersey and American Cabots to be of the same family as the navigators. The identity of arms and motto can leave but little doubt on this last point.

accurately traced,[1] and which the most patient labor has failed to carry beyond the parents of those who first emigrated to Massachusetts.

With this explanation as to the name and family, the region of conjecture and speculation may be left, and the history of the New England family briefly and surely sketched from the certain testimony of legal records and family papers. Some time in the latter half of the seventeenth century, François Cabot, of St. Trinity, a large land-owner and wealthy man,[2] married Suzanne Gruchy.[3] In 1677, a son of theirs was baptized George in the St. Heliers Church, whose records show that three years later another son received the name of Jean. There was also an older son, whose baptism is not recorded, named François. About 1699, the registry of deeds at St. Heliers bears witness that the three sons just named sold a large amount of real estate; and soon afterwards, apparently, they emigrated to Massachusetts. Of François, nothing is known after his arrival in America, except the bare fact that he was a ship-owner and merchant in conjunction with his brother George. The latter was rated as a tax-payer in Salem, in 1700; and in a conveyance of Jersey land made in the following year is described as a joiner. Soon after his arrival, George Cabot made a good marriage, obtaining the hand of Abigail Marston, of Salem, daughter of Benjamin Marston and Patience Rogers. Mrs. Cabot died in 1709, and her husband survived her less than a year. Whether George Cabot pursued his trade in his new home is not known;

[1] For nearly all that follows in regard to the New England family, I am indebted to the kindness of Henry Lee, Esq., by whose careful investigations the Cabot genealogy has been fully settled.

[2] Mr. Payne says, in regard to the Cabot family, "The eldest branch of this family, which formerly held much landed property in the parish of St. Trinity, emigrated to America in the person of George Cabot," &c. — *Armorial of Jersey*, p. 50. Mr. Payne connects the Cabots of St. Trinity with both the Chabots of Poitou and the Cabots of Normandy.

[3] Suzanne Gruchy was of the same family as the Marshal Grouchy of Napoleon's time, who did not come up at Waterloo. See Armorial of Jersey, p. 120.

but old business letters preserve the memory of various mercantile enterprises, in which he was engaged with his brother François. Mr. Felt, in his "Annals of Salem,"[1] speaks of Benjamin Marston's house as the first brick house built in Salem; and he says the mason and builder was George Cabot. As I have just stated, George Cabot married Marston's daughter; but whether he obtained her hand after services rendered to her father as a mason, or whether from superior knowledge he was enabled to direct the construction of his father-in-law's house, and was therefore supposed to be a mason, I am unable to determine. The presumption, however, is strong that the first George Cabot, though a jack-of-all-trades, was master of none; for neither inherited property, nor skill in the joiner's or mason's crafts, nor ventures at sea, were able to save him from ultimate failure. Whatever his occupation, it is certain that he was unsuccessful, and at his death his brother John administered *de bonis non*. George Cabot left two children, — one daughter, and one son named Marston Cabot. Marston was first cared for by his mother's family, but afterwards was adopted by his paternal uncle, and in 1720 entered Harvard College in the same class with his cousin, John. Despite the apparent generosity of John Cabot to his brother's orphan children, the relations between the nephew and uncle do not seem to have been pleasant. While still a boy and about to enter college, Marston Cabot, and his uncle Benjamin Marston as well, wrote to his grandmother in Jersey, asking assistance, and deprecating a state of dependence on his uncle John.[2] Graduating in 1724, Marston Cabot entered the ministry, and removed to Killingly, Conn., to take charge of a parish. He there married, begot thirteen children, published a few sermons, and before he had completed his fiftieth year died

[1] Annals of Salem, I. 414. Mr. Felt cites no authority in support of this statement, and I have relied solely on his well-known accuracy.

[2] See N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register, XXVII. 294.

suddenly one Sunday morning in his pulpit. His descendants still live in Connecticut.

John Cabot, the youngest of the three emigrant brothers, also came to Salem in 1700; and, like his brother George, made a fortunate marriage. His wife, Anna Orne, belonged to one of the prominent Essex families of the earliest English emigration. In no other respect, however, does the resemblance of John Cabot's career hold with that of his older brother. Unlike George, he prospered greatly in business, became a leading merchant,[1] and built himself a goodly house in Salem. Indeed, we have a right to believe that John Cabot brought a considerable amount of property with him to his new home. Not only the circumstances of his marriage point to this, but Colonel Benjamin Pickman,[2] in describing the old houses of Salem, mentions John Cabot's house as dating from the year 1700. The house could hardly have been as old as this; but Pickman's evidence shows that John Cabot, almost immediately upon his arrival, was rich enough to build what was considered for many years afterwards one of the handsomest of the Salem houses. He was certainly not a needy adventurer in the New World, but followed the example of many of his prosperous countrymen[3] in emigrating to Salem. He had nine children. The oldest son, John, was admitted to Harvard, as already mentioned, in 1720, together with his cousin Marston, and after graduation studied medicine, and practised successfully as a physician. The youngest son of this numerous

[1] Samuel Gardner, in his Journal, mentions John Cabot's interests in the fisheries (Essex Institute, II. 252); and, in a description of some rare coins sold not long since in Salem, it is said this coin was given by an "eminent merchant, John Cabot, of Salem," to his daughter Margaret, on her marriage with Benjamin Gerrish, afterwards royal Governor of the Bermudas. Essex Institute, V. 31; Felt's Annals, first edition, p. 443.

[2] Proceedings of Essex Institute, Pickman's notes, VI. 107.

[3] The Englishes, afterwards distinguished in Salem history, were from Jersey, and settled in Salem as early as 1670. Lefavour was the name of still another Salem family of Jersey origin. See Essex Institute Proc., I. 158.

family, who was named Joseph, entered into business, like his father, and was equally prosperous. He remained in Salem, and married Elizabeth Higginson, a direct descendant in the fifth generation from Francis Higginson, the first minister of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Nine sons and two daughters were the fruits of this marriage. The seventh child and fifth son of Joseph Cabot was George Cabot, — the subject of this memoir, — born Dec. 16, 1751.

Owing to the careless and wanton destruction of family papers, little is now known of George Cabot's early years. His childhood was passed amidst the healthy and sober influences of a well-ordered New England household, and in the pure, invigorating atmosphere of a thriving Puritan town. His father was a prosperous and upright man, and his mother a woman of strong understanding and firm character. He was educated at the best schools of the day, where he displayed so much proficiency in his studies that in 1766 his father sent him to Harvard College. At that time, the oldest son appears to have been usually the only recipient of the highest education: and the selection of George was therefore a parental compliment to his boyish powers. Two years after George entered college, his father died. In his will he provided: —

"That my son George, who now belongs to Harvard Colledge, shall be supported and maintained by and out of my estate, while he shall belong to said Colledge, (*i.e.*) untill he shall have taken one Degree there; or untill the time which according to the Common Usage shall or ought to be appointed for giving Degrees to the Class to which he belongs, or is a member of; the said George continuing to belong to said Colledge and not being expelled."

Although Joseph Cabot was esteemed a wealthy man, his property, when divided among the widow and nine children, yielded but six hundred pounds to each of the younger ones, a narrow inheritance, even in those days of small

things. Unwilling to be a charge upon his father's estate, in accordance with the terms of the will, and probably still more unwilling to diminish his already slender patrimony, George left college at the end of his Sophomore year, and, true to the Essex customs, went to seek his fortune at sea. Not yet seventeen years old, he shipped as cabin-boy in a vessel commanded by his brother-in-law, Mr. Joseph Lee. Such a change in his mode of life must have been a sharp one to a young collegian of studious habits: nor was his lot softened by relationship with his captain; for, if family tradition may be trusted, Mr. Lee gave his young kinsman the full benefit of severe ship's discipline. Cabot, however, was not discouraged, but pursued his profession with such success and determination that, before he reached his majority, he was himself in command of a ship.

This early experience was not without effect upon his after life. By it he was of course deprived of the full advantages of that classical education to which his tastes strongly impelled him; but his early contact with the world developed manly qualities and knowledge of men, while the responsibilities of his profession demanded reflection, forethought, and self-command. Yet, though engaged in active pursuits before most boys now leave school, he never lost his love of books. Always a student, he now made the most of the opportunities afforded by travel, and turned his attention to foreign languages. He acquired a good knowledge of French, and became very proficient in Spanish, — accomplishments less common then than now. Voyages to foreign countries were likewise beneficial in increasing his understanding of the politics and interests of other nations, and the knowledge so gained proved subsequently of great value. A strong fancy for natural sciences led him to devote much time to them; and he was also fond of metaphysics; but his favorite subjects were politics and political economy, which continued to be a constant source of study and amusement from the day he

went to sea to the day of his death. To practice he added theory: for commerce was to him not only a livelihood, but a study; and, in later life, the knowledge of commercial laws and necessities thus acquired gave him a position of authority in regard to all such topics. Among the New Englanders, the men of Boston and Salem, of Marblehead and Newburyport, George Cabot was only one of many whose minds ripened into a peculiar flavor, and grew strong with a robust and masculine vigor, in this school which never failed to leave on its scholars a characteristic stamp of the quarter-deck and a dash of salt water. For this it was well worth while to sacrifice two years of a college life, which in those days was neither highly cultivated nor deeply scientific. Books and independent thinking were always the great pleasures and resources of his life, and as long as he had opportunity for them he was content. Such methods of instruction were not calculated to develop the imagination, but they were eminently fitted to stimulate the growth of those talents most needed in the American Colonies. Mr. Cabot's education had the same defects and the same advantages as that of his contemporaries: it was typical of the mode of thought and manner of life which bred up a class of clear-headed, strong-willed, sensible men, at a time when the sentimentalism, which at a later day flooded the country, would have been ruinous. Such education was essentially practical, but its practicality was of that sort which seeks in past experience a guide for future action. The men of that age, while striking out for themselves a new path in a new country, never fell into the mistake of abandoning practice in favor of theory. They may possibly have leaned too strongly in the other direction, but to look at facts as they were was the lesson which their early life had taught them; and if from lack of imagination they went too far in their contempt for theory, at least they understood what they meant, and maintained their own cause with a native shrewdness and tenacity which stamp them as men of a peculiar mould.

CHAPTER II.

1775–1790.

Business Relations. — Marriage. — Town Affairs. — Privateering. — Committee of Town to consider Constitution. — Convention at Concord. — Convention to form State Constitution. — Convention to adopt Federal Constitution. — Correspondence.

MR. CABOT soon abandoned the career of a sea captain for that of a merchant, and was joined in many business adventures with his brother-in-law, Mr. Joseph Lee, with whom, in 1785, he formed a partnership. Mr. Lee and Mr. Cabot were both engaged in the same trade that they had severally pursued when in command of ships. They prospered in their business, and became large ship-owners and merchants. They were established in Beverly, then considered by its inhabitants the great New England seaport of the future. This belief was common to all Essex towns possessing a good harbor; and its gradual extinction, as the tide of prosperity flowed steadily towards Boston, is very striking. Despite the troubles with England, the Essex commerce had much increased and the little trading towns flattered themselves with the hope that they were on the threshold of a great career. The town and its young merchants during those years throve together; and the partnership afterwards formed between Mr. Lee and Mr. Cabot continued until both removed from Beverly. In 1774, Mr. Cabot was married to his double-first-cousin, Elizabeth Higginson. This union was destined to be both long and happy. Mrs. Cabot possessed unusual mental powers, together with great force of character and strength

of will; while at the same time she did not lack the more attractive and more essential qualities of her sex.[1]

Mr. Cabot always took a warm interest in town affairs, and in the town meetings learned, like so many other New

[1] Mr. John Lowell, the well-known lawyer and writer of the early part of this century, in a letter to his cousin, Mr. Stephen Higginson, on the death of Mrs. Cabot, speaks of her as follows: —

JULY 17, 1826.

. . . We have lost, my dear cousin, *one* of the last of a race, of whom we may justly be proud; and it is no alleviation to our deep, and to us both, sincere regret at the departure of our dear aunt that we have little reason to expect to see her equal in any of our families. It is not the course of the world to estimate justly female merit. The present age is somewhat more correct in this respect; but *still* many an accomplished woman, with high and elevated powers, passes off the stage with little notice, while a *man* of far inferior natural powers, from the adventitious circumstance of his having held offices which a female of great talents would have better sustained, fills the world for a time with his posthumous praises. I do not quarrel with this state of public feeling, because it was part of the wise system of Providence that the province of the two sexes should be separate. Still, however, that same Providence occasionally permits that some gifted females should appear, who seem by their talents calculated to rule rather than obey. Of this last description was our revered departed friend. She had all the firmness, vigor, resolution, penetration, capacity to form and express her thoughts in a strong, clear, and masculine style, which are found in men of the firmest, boldest, and most elevated temperament and mind. If she had been called like Elizabeth to stations of great power, she would have been like her, prudent, energetic, and commanding. She had none of the advantages of early education afforded so bountifully to the young ladies of the present age; but she surpassed *all* of them in the acuteness of her observation, in the knowledge of human nature, and in her powers of expressing and defending the opinions which she had formed. Without systematic knowledge, her mind was filled with information on every topic interesting to us in this world. No doubt she derived great benefit from the intercourse with one of the most luminous minds of the age, with whom for nearly fifty years she was associated. With these great qualities, for great they were, she had a full share of all the virtues of her sex. Her firmness and resolution were mingled with kindness and tenderness and affection for her own children and all her numerous friends. It is a pleasure to me, and it will be to you, to take this retrospective view of her life and character. To me, it is a deep loss; for there remains not another mind, in a perfect state, to whom I can look up for sympathy among a departed and departing race, very dear to me. J. LOWELL.

This is a good portrait of the best type of New England woman in the last century. I owe this letter to the kindness of Miss Anna Cabot Lowell.

Englanders, his first lessons in parliamentary debate and in the art of popular self-government. The only town office ever held by Mr. Cabot was that of fire-ward, in 1787; but he was ever active in the support of all projects that could promote the prosperity of Beverly. In 1787, the scheme of the Essex Bridge, to connect the towns of Salem and Beverly, was proposed; and Mr. Cabot was the first named in the act of incorporation. He was subsequently director and president of the Bridge Company, and gave much time and attention to the speedy completion of what was then regarded as a great undertaking.

Mr. Cabot's marriage had taken place just as the country was actually involved in war. In the troubles which preceded the actual outbreak of hostilities, and throughout the Revolution, Mr. Cabot and all his family and friends warmly espoused the "patriotic" side. When war began, the men of Essex turned naturally to the sea as the element on which they could best serve their country. They were more fortunate in their choice than most of their fellow-citizens; for privateering, the only naval warfare possible to the colonists, was not only patriotic, but profitable to those engaged. The Essex ships were scattered in all directions, and preyed upon English commerce with great prejudice to the enemy, and much benefit to themselves and their country. Many of these privateers were owned by the Cabots and Lees, and had notable success. The "Cicero," one of Mr. Cabot's ships, was commanded by Captain Hugh Hill, a man of great daring and well known at that time. Andrew Cabot's ship "Defiance," also a privateer, was destroyed in the ill-starred Penobscot expedition of 1779.[1] The younger mem-

[1] Curwen, himself an Essex man, in his Journal (p. 234), speaks with a slight touch of loyalist bitterness of the success of his former friends: "The Cabots of Beverly, who, you know, had but five years ago a very moderate share of property, are now said to be by far the most wealthy in New England. Hasket Derby claims the second place on the list." . . . This was in

bers of the family served their country in other ways. Mr. Cabot's younger brother, Francis, was in Colonel Pickering's regiment on his Rhode Island expedition, and subsequently in Washington's army.

During these eventful years, Mr. Cabot was often chosen by his fellow-townsmen to represent them in State affairs. In 1778, a Constitution, framed by a committee of the General Court in its capacity as a Convention, was submitted to the people. The objections to the instrument were weighty. There was no declaration of rights; the principle of representation was not a just one; the powers and duties of the legislature and executive were not properly defined; and the Constitution itself was the work of the General Court, and not of a convention of delegates.[1] On the 22d of May, this Constitution was submitted to the town of Beverly, and rejected by a very large majority of the voters. A committee, consisting of George Cabot,

1780. Yet even the profitable patriotism of the privateer was not always unattended with sacrifices and misfortunes. Colonel John Trumbull, in his "Reminiscences" (p. 84), says that he took passage at Bilbao for Beverly, in 1781, in the "Cicero," a fine letter-of-marque ship, of twenty guns and one hundred and twenty men, Captain Hill, belonging to the house of Cabot. When Colonel Trumbull joined the ship, she had with her a British Lisbon packet of sixteen guns, which she had just taken as a prize. On his arrival at Beverly, Colonel Trumbull saw lying in the harbor eleven privateers all finer than the "Cicero" in which he had been a passenger, and all belonging to the Cabots. The following year the same writer speaks of being in Beverly again, and adds that not one of the privateers was to be seen in the harbor. All had been lost, and the Cabots did not have a single letter-of-marque ship afloat. Many of these vessels belonged to John and Andrew Cabot, who, like their brother George, were also Beverly merchants.

The translator of Chastellux has a note on the same subject: —

"The town of Beverly began to flourish greatly towards the conclusion of the war, by the extraordinary spirit of enterprise and great success of the Messrs. Cabot, gentlemen of strong understandings and the most liberal minds, well adapted to the most enlarged commercial undertakings and the business of government. Two of their privateers had the good fortune to capture in the European seas, a few weeks previous to the peace, several West-Indiamen, to the value of at least £100,000 sterling." — *Chastellux, Travels in North America*, translated from the French, London, 1787, II. 252, 253.

[1] Barry, History of Massachusetts, 3–175, 176; Bradford, II. 158, 159.

Joseph Willard,[1] and William Bartlett, was then appointed to draft instructions to the town's representative in the General Court, that he might give the precise reasons for the town's dissent. The report submitted by this committee, and adopted by the town, was drawn with considerable ability. Objection was chiefly made on the ground of inequality of representation, and defects in the election of senators. The report concluded in a manner characteristic of the New England temper: —

"Good government, we are sensible, is essential to the happiness of the community; and this we ardently wish to take place, and shall sincerely endeavor to promote and encourage it. But if any form is offered to us, which we in our consciences think does not tend to the public welfare, but in its consequences is destructive of it, to oppose such form with a decent but manly and zealous freedom and firmness is a duty we owe to ourselves and posterity, and we shall ever esteem ourselves bound to attend to its calls."

In July, 1779, a State Convention was held at Concord, to adopt such measures as would tend to appreciate the currency. This was but one of the many visionary attempts to obviate by legislative enactments the sure workings of economic laws. It was then considered possible as well as patriotic, by fixing a maximum of prices, to heal the wounds inflicted on the community through war, the ruin of commerce, and disordered finances. Mr. Cabot took a leading part in this Convention, in opposition to the theory that by acts of the legislature men could be forced to sell at reduced rates, and the public be thereby benefited. The current of popular feeling, however, was too strong to be resisted, and modifications in the report were all that Mr. Cabot obtained. The action of this Convention was but an example of many similar ones. States and counties were all engaged in the vain effort to remedy, by law, the inevitable results of war and economic igno-

[1] Afterwards President of Harvard College.

rance. Mr. Cabot's course in opposing these generally accepted views merely serves to show the value of his previous studies. In a period when Adam Smith was hardly known, and twenty years before the writings of Say and the Continental school had appeared, to oppose on economic grounds propositions deemed not only wise, but patriotic, shows both independence and liberality of mind. Mr. Cabot was at that time not twenty-nine; and, although his opposition was fruitless, it was creditable to his courage and judgment.

In the following summer, August, 1780, Mr. Cabot was elected a delegate by the town of Beverly, to attend the Convention for forming a State Constitution. This Convention was composed of the best and ablest men in Massachusetts. Among the members were Samuel and John Adams, John Hancock, John Lowell, Theophilus Parsons, James Sullivan, Levi Lincoln, and Caleb Strong. The Convention, admirably adapted for the work before it, organized on September 1st by the choice of James Bowdoin as President and Samuel Barrett as Secretary. A committee of thirty, twenty-six from the counties and four at large, was appointed to draft a Constitution. The Convention then adjourned to the 28th of October, in order to give the committee time to report, and to allow certain towns, which had not received precepts, to elect delegates. On the reassembling of the Convention, there was much indecisive discussion, followed by an adjournment until January, 1781, when the debate was again resumed. The draft of the General Convention was discussed clause by clause, and each section was usually entrusted to a sub-committee to redraft and report. The journal of the Convention shows that Mr. Cabot served on several of these sub-committees.[1] The Constitution, as finally submitted, was not, however, adopted without considerable opposition. The general tendency in the Con-

[1] Report of the Convention to form a Constitution, Boston, 1780.

vention had been conservative, and the members had made as few innovations as possible. In this they were undoubtedly wise; but there was a popular party which considered that the Constitution had not gone far enough, and had yielded too much to prejudice and tradition.[1] In the ensuing elections, the representatives of the State in Congress, and some of the more moderate leaders at home, opposed Governor Hancock, the popular candidate, and supported James Bowdoin, who was thought to represent the more conservative elements. It was a vain opposition; but the contest, though unattended with much virulence, produced a good deal of strong feeling on both sides. Then for the first time may be discerned the uncertain outlines of those divisions which grew steadily during the next few years, took definite shape in the Convention to adopt the Federal Constitution, and finally culminated in two great national parties. It was at this time that Hancock is said to have bestowed on his opponents the title of the "Essex Junto,"[2] and this is the first appearance of the name in American politics. Mr. Cabot was so closely connected with the men who are popularly supposed to have formed the "Junto," that it is proper to give some account of that body, which in its day was honored by the invective of Mr. Clay, and by the bitter hostility of both John and John Quincy Adams. The denunciations of these distinguished men, while they leave no doubt as to their respective opinions, are, nevertheless, vague, and give no clear notion as to what the object of their invective really was. Judged solely by the rather uncertain language of its enemies, the "Junto" was a well-defined organization, which for many years exerted a powerful influence on Massachusetts politics and the Federal party. Like most hostile descriptions, this is partly true and partly false; and I shall try, there-

[1] Barry, 3, 179; Bradford, II. 187; Boston Gazette, March 13, 1780; Austin's Life of Gerry, I. 353.

[2] Memoir of Chief Justice Parsons, p. 48.

fore, to describe the "Junto," and to decide whether it was really an organized political body, or merely a cant name applied to certain individuals, who usually supported a common policy, and represented a fraction of a large party. The "Junto" was generally supposed to be composed of such men as Theophilus Parsons, George Cabot, Fisher Ames, Stephen Higginson, the Lowells, Timothy Pickering, &c., and took its name from the county to which most of its reputed members originally belonged.

The men of Essex were descendants of those who, in the dark days of 1629, followed Endicott into the wilderness. They were of the oldest Puritan stock; and, after all the modifications of a century and a half, they still retained the marks of their ancestry. The lines were softened, but still distinct; and the inhabitants of Essex, at the close of the last century, more fully perhaps than those of almost any other New England county, represented the Puritan character both in its strength and its limitations. Strong, honest, in many cases of an almost reckless courage, they were sagacious in civil, and bold in military life. But their intellectual vigor and clear perceptions were in many instances combined with great mental narrowness and rigidity. Then, as always, in the days of Revolution, and in the years when disintegration threatened the country, the men of Puritan descent were foremost. But, when time brought changes and an expansion of ideas, the older generation could not, in Massachusetts, bend sufficiently to the new political forces. They resisted when they could, and, though unconvinced, stoically submitted when resistance was not longer possible. But the services they rendered in trying times may well efface the remembrance of an obstinacy, which proceeded from strength, not from weakness, and by which they were themselves the greatest sufferers.[1]

[1] In this description of the "Essex Junto," I have written without especial reference to Mr. Cabot, who was of Puritan descent on his mother's side alone. The paragraph is intended to be of general application in regard to the characteristics of the prominent Essex leaders.

Of such material was the "Essex Junto" composed, and such was the nature of most of the leaders. Taken as a whole, they present a striking example of the mixture of sense and prejudice, of liberality and narrowness, of cautious sagacity and reckless audacity, which has from the beginning marked the New England character. The reputed members of the "Junto" held political power in Massachusetts for more than a quarter of a century, and their successes and failures are a part of the history of the State. The subject is, therefore, of sufficient importance to warrant the introduction here of the only account of the "Essex Junto," by one of its so-called members. This description is from the common-place book or diary of Timothy Pickering; and the general tone is so characteristic of the writer, that, though the incidental political views have no immediate bearing on the present subject, I have ventured to quote the entire passage. On this point, the testimony of Colonel Pickering[1] and Judge Parsons is of the greatest value; and it will be seen from their statement that the theory of an organized body known as the "Junto" has no foundation.

"THE ESSEX JUNTO."

"Many persons, in States remote from Massachusetts, seem to have entertained an idea that a number of influential men, originally of the county of Essex, had associated and formed an organized body, whose object it was to advance a plan of public policy peculiar to themselves, in the administration of the general government, and particularly in opposition to that administration which, by way of excellence, the actors themselves have chosen to call Republican. And the term 'Essex Junto' has been used, like that of 'The Hartford Convention,' for the purpose of public deception. The innocent — the more than innocent, the laudable — purpose for which the latter was instituted, I have lately taken occasion briefly to show; referring any who desired more full and

[1] Colonel Pickering, although absent from Massachusetts in the early days of the "Junto," was afterwards so intimately connected with its reputed members as to be a good witness.

complete information to the excellent and perfectly satisfactory letters of Mr. Otis. I will now give a brief account of 'The Essex Junto.'

"Although born in Essex, and residing there during the first two-and-thirty years of my life, and officially well acquainted with the county, I never heard the term 'Essex Junto;' nor till twenty years afterwards (in 1797), when the election of John Adams to the office of President of the United States had been ascertained. Having called to see him at his lodgings in Philadelphia (say in January, 1797), he spoke of the issue of the Presidential election, and seemed to be vexed because he had so small a number of votes (only three) over his rival, Thomas Jefferson. This he seemed to think was owing, in part, to some influential men in Massachusetts, who, instead of zealously promoting, were at best but lukewarm in regard to his election. There were three in particular, of whom he spoke with warmth, — George Cabot, Stephen Higginson, and Theophilus Parsons. All were natives of Essex, and all were my friends. The two former had removed to Boston, and the latter went thither afterwards.

"These gentlemen, well acquainted with certain peculiarities in Mr. Adams's character, and thinking, doubtless, that the administration of the general government would be at least as safe in the hands of another, were willing, I presume, that his Federal associate in the nomination for President and Vice-President — Charles C. Pinckney, a distinguished citizen of South Carolina — should stand at least as high on the electoral list as Mr. Adams himself. It was this indifference, or lukewarmness towards him, as one of the Presidential candidates, that appeared to have excited in Mr. Adams such warmth of resentment, petulantly expressed, as I have in another paper recently mentioned.

"In one of my conversations with the late Chief Justice Parsons, I asked if he knew the origin of the term 'Essex Junto.' He answered that some time prior to the American Revolution, when Massachusetts was under her charter government, one of the royal governors (all received their appointments from the King of England), having a favorite measure to carry in the Legislature, was opposed by some able and influential members from the county of Essex, and defeated. The governor, disappointed and irritated, ascribed his defeat to the 'Essex Junto.' This origin of the name does no discredit to Old Essex. If able and

influential men there and elsewhere in Massachusetts, and in the other States of the Union, had been able to resist and defeat certain great measures taken in some of the administrations which succeeded Washington's, they would have been entitled to the lasting gratitude of their country. The men here referred to were those in whom Washington (entertaining the same views and holding the same principles in regard to what the public welfare demanded) placed his confidence, while he considered and pronounced the popular leaders of their opponents 'the curse of their country.' Hence the inference is obvious, that Washington himself and the other eminent Federalists deceased, as well as their Federal survivors, would be comprehended in the term 'Essex Junto.'"

In a letter to George Henry Rose, the British minister to the United States, in 1806, Colonel Pickering has given another description of the "Junto." It tallies exactly with that just quoted, but presents some additional details; and I therefore insert it: —

"In the 'National Intelligencer' of yesterday, in the remarks on my letter of February 16 to Governor Sullivan, you will see mentioned the 'Essex Junto,' among whom the editor has honored me with a place. This may need explanation to a stranger.

"Having then been absent many years from my native State, I think the first time I heard the phrase was from the mouth of the late President Adams, just at the moment when he succeeded General Washington in the Presidency. He had understood that the persons comprehended in the term 'Essex Junto' had opposed, at least had not favored, his election [they all knew his pride, his vanity, and his eccentricities], and thereby had committed a deadly sin. Mentioning this to me with some warmth, and in language not very dignified, he pronounced the names of those gentlemen, who were confessedly the principals in that society of friends which he called the 'Essex Junto,' just as I have written them, — George Cabot, Thoph. Parsons, and Steph. Higginson. These gentlemen now live in Boston, in Suffolk County. Mr. Cabot's character I have already given you. Mr. Higginson is one of the best informed and most intelligent of our merchants. And Mr. Parsons is so eminent a lawyer (and, I might add, a man of universal science) that in New England he is often designated by 'The Giant of the Law.' He is now Chief Justice of Massachusetts,

and would do honor to either Bench in Westminster Hall. These three gentlemen happened all to have been born in the county of Essex. I esteem it fortunate that the same county gave me birth, and my highest honor to have those gentlemen for my friends."

From this it appears that the name was originally applied by a royal governor to some of his political opponents; and when first given was still familiar, and of ill-repute in England,[1] although its origin in Massachusetts was far from discreditable. Nevertheless, it was an odious title; and Hancock meant it to be so, if it is true that he used it against his opponents. Reintroduced at a moment when parties were growing more sharply defined, the old name once revived was not soon abandoned; and, in the political strife of later times, abuse was lavished upon the "Essex Junto," which would have been almost too strong for the "Cabal" of the Restoration. But to-day this formidable political engine resolves itself into a cant political term, applied to a certain wing of the Federalist party.

Shortly after the new Constitution went into operation, Mr. Cabot was chosen a senator from Essex. The Legislature of 1782–83 adjourned in the autumn of 1782, until January of the next year. During the time of adjournment, a vacancy occurred among the Essex senators; and Mr. Cabot, having been elected to the position, took his

[1] Although the name had not been used before the days of royal governors, the county of Essex had grasped at political control in Massachusetts at a much earlier period. In 1644, the Essex men turned Winthrop and Dudley out their offices of Federal commissioners, and replaced them with Hathorne and Bradstreet, both of Essex County. By the same combination, a very formidable attempt was made to dictate the proceedings of the whole government. They aimed to remove the government and the court to their county, and also to obtain four places in the magistracy. Dr. Palfrey says in this connection: "Two hundred years ago, it seems, Essex men were thought to be aspiring to rule the colony, as fifty years ago an 'Essex Junto' was cried out against for its alleged ambition to rule the Commonwealth. A vital local influence has its ebbs and flows, which sometimes history discloses." (Hist. of New England, II. 157, note.) In the past history of Massachusetts, Essex seems to have ever been the strongest, most ambitious, and most powerful politically of all the counties.

seat at the opening of the new year. The journals[1] of the State Senate bear witness to his constant attendance and faithful work; and this portion of his career is connected with a brief contemporary allusion to his powers as a public speaker. The English translator of Chastellux's "Travels" was in Boston during the winter of 1782–83. He says: "There were then violent debates in the Assembly and the Senate, respecting the duration of the Sabbath. One party were for having it consist of six-and-thirty hours, commencing at six o'clock on the Saturday evening; whilst the other insisted on abridging it to eighteen, reckoning from the midnight of Saturday, and finishing at six on the Sunday evening. The former proposition passed the Assembly, where the country interest prevailed; but was thrown out in the Senate by the predominant interest of the merchants, aided by good sense and the palpable absurdity of such a regulation in a commercial country abounding with strangers. Mr. Cabot, a very sensible man, and a rich merchant of Beverly, distinguished himself on this occasion by a speech full of eloquence and wit."[2] To the chance presence of a stranger, Mr. Cabot is indebted for the rescue of his speech from oblivion; and upon his public life at that time the few words of this eye-witness throw a passing gleam of light. The unexpired term for which Mr. Cabot had been chosen lasted only to May, 1783; and, although urged to continue in office, he declined a re-election.

In the recurring political struggles, Mr. Cabot warmly espoused the cause of the party opposed to Hancock, and gave his support to Bowdoin. Not only association, but character and modes of thought, made any thing except a quiet, though vigorous, conservatism impossible to him. At this time (1780–88) there were no political parties, in the strict sense of the term. The war had but just ceased, and society was in a state of solution: old things had passed

[1] See manuscript Journals of Massachusetts Senate for the years 1782, 1783, at the State House in Boston.

[2] Chastellux's Travels in North America, translated from the French, London, 1787, II. 383, 384.

away, but new ones had not yet grown up to take their place. The men who then were masters had all alike been Whigs and patriots. In other words, one party had prevailed to such an extent that no other existed. But in the opposition to Governor Hancock, as I have said, the germs of the new divisions may be discovered. The political differences for some time developed slowly; but, during the confusion of the years which succeeded the close of the war, the conservative elements gradually gathered strength. Bowdoin was elected governor in 1784, and held office until the close of the Shays rebellion. His vigorous and manly course in that insurrection destroyed his personal popularity; but the party which had supported him gained in force and consistency from the strong reaction against the anarchy of the Confederation.

In 1788, the Massachusetts Convention to consider the adoption of the Constitution met. The Federalists were in a minority; and the majority opposed to them was formidable and determined. But the "friends of the Constitution," as they were then called, — whose leaders were Rufus King, Ames, Parsons, Cabot, and others of the same stamp, — possessed great ability, and had the advantage of definite purpose and cordial co-operation. Their opponents, though without much ability, were strong numerically, and powerfully supported by local prejudices. The appearance of many of Shays's partisans lent bitterness to the conflict; but, if these insurrectionists added to the numbers and persistency of the opposition, they in no less degree roused the zeal of the Federalists, thus brought face to face with the recent promoters of rebellion.

Between the contending parties stood two men of high position, great influence, and almost unbounded popularity. John Hancock and Samuel Adams were able to insure success to those who secured their support: but their opinions were not known. The Federalists, thoroughly appreciating the situation, devoted all their energies to obtain

for the new scheme the adherence of the two Revolutionary leaders, in whose hands victory rested. Hancock was easily dealt with. The Federalist leaders understood their man perfectly, and were adroit enough to reason with and flatter the governor, so successfully that Parsons actually persuaded him to preside at the Convention, and to read a speech prepared by Parsons himself.[1] It was by no means so simple a matter to secure Samuel Adams. He was not to be flattered, and he could argue and dispute with the best and ablest of the Federalists. Nevertheless, he, too, had his weak point, and in one way the ardent supporters of the new scheme could apply persuasion. In moments of doubt as to questions of great moment, Samuel Adams, with the true instincts of a popular leader, had always relied on public feeling in Boston for guidance; and the Federalists now made use of public feeling to turn him to their side. The mechanics of the town favored the Constitution; and their leaders called a meeting, whose loudly expressed Federalist sentiments some trusty followers, headed by Paul Revere, promptly conveyed to Adams. The effort was successful, and Adams gave in his support to the new scheme. Other lesser men were also converted, and much effective work was done which does not appear in the records of the proceedings.

In these unofficial debates, Mr. Cabot's manner, address, and powers of conversation were of especial value and were willingly exerted. Since he had last served in a State convention, eight years before, the country had passed through all the miseries entailed by the weak and wretched government of the Confederation; and these misfortunes had contributed to deepen his belief in the necessity of a stronger and more conservative establishment. During this interval also, business had taken him much to New York, where he formed the acquaintance of Hamilton and the other Feder-

[1] Life of Samuel Adams, II. 248–276; Life of Gerry, II. ch. ii. See also Memoir of Parsons, p. 70 and ff., for a full account of the Federalist movements.

alist leaders of that State.[1] This acquaintance, which in the case of Hamilton ripened into a life-long friendship, helped to strengthen Mr. Cabot's already firm convictions; and, when he was chosen a delegate to the Convention, he gave himself up wholly to the work before him. His personal friends were those who led the Federalists, and nothing contributed more to their success than the concert and unanimity displayed in their counsels. It would be superfluous here to follow in detail the history of the Convention. Mr. Cabot's position has been defined, and his share in the labors outside the Convention has been sufficiently alluded to. To sketch the part he took in the public debates is all, therefore, that remains to be done in this connection. Mr. Cabot spoke seldom, but always forcibly and clearly; and his arguments, if we may judge by the report, commanded general attention.

The fourth section of the first article in the Constitution was vigorously opposed. This section, it will be remembered, provides that "the times, places, and manner of holding elections for senators and representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time, by law, make or alter such regulations, except as to the places of choosing senators." This appeared to the jealous eyes of the opposition to infringe on the pet New England principle of free representation. At this point, there was a long and vigorous resistance; and the Federalists were obliged to put forth all their strength in order to dispel the phantom which had been conjured up, of an external power controlling the popular representation. Mr. Cabot, in replying to this attack, began by a few remarks on the biennial election of representatives, saying: —

[1] On one of his visits to New York, Mr. Cabot met Mr. Jefferson; and the latter, then on his way to Europe, borrowed of Mr. Cabot a Spanish grammar, by the aid of which he mastered that language in the short space of nineteen days. (Diary of J. Q. Adams, I. 317.) What impression the eminent Virginian made upon him does not appear; but Mr. Cabot's conservative and Federalist tendencies do not seem to have been abated.

"We should consider the particular business which that body will frequently be called upon to transact, especially in the way of revenue. We should consider that, on a question of supplies of money to support a war or purchase a treaty, it will be impossible for those representatives to judge of the expediency or inexpediency of such supplies, until they shall have had time to become acquainted with the general system of Federal politics, in its connection or relation to foreign powers; because upon the situation of those must depend the propriety or impropriety of granting supplies. If to this be added a due attention to the easiest way of raising such supplies, it must appear that biennial elections are as frequent as is consistent with using the power of the representatives, for the benefit of their constituents."

Mr. Cabot then turned to the fourth section, at that moment under debate, and said: —

"It gives me no pain to see the anxiety of different gentlemen concerning the paragraph under consideration, as it evidences a conviction in their minds of what I believe to be true, — *that a free and equal representation is the best, if not the only, foundation upon which a free government can be built*, and consequently that the greatest care should be taken in laying it. I am, sir, one of the people: such I shall continue; and with these feelings I hold 'that the right of electing persons to represent the people in the federal government is an important and sacred right.' The opinions that have been offered upon the manner in which the exercise of this right is provided for by the fourth section satisfy me that we are all solicitous for the same end, and that we only differ as to the means of attaining it; and, for my own part, I confess that I prize the fourth section as highly as any in the Constitution, because I consider the *democratic* branch of the national government, the branch chosen immediately by the people, as intended to be a check on the *federal* branch, which latter is not an immediate representation of the people of America, and is not chosen by them, but is a representation of the sovereignty of the individual States, and its members delegated by the several State legislatures; and, if the State legislatures are suffered to regulate conclusively the elections of the democratic branch, they may, by such an interference, first weaken, and at last destroy, that check. They may at first diminish, and finally annihilate, that control of the general government

which the people ought always to have through their immediate representatives. As one of the people, therefore, I repeat that, in my mind, the fourth section is to be as highly prized as any in the Constitution."

In the debate on the wide subject of the powers of Congress, Dr. Willard

"Entered largely into the field of ancient history, and deduced therefrom arguments to prove that where power had been trusted to men, whether in great or small bodies, they had always abused it, and that thus republics had soon degenerated into aristocracies."

"Hon. Mr. Gorham (in reply to the gentleman from Uxbridge) exposed the absurdity of conclusions and hypotheses drawn from ancient governments, which bore no relation to the confederacy proposed."

"Hon. Mr. Cabot went fully into a continuation of the arguments of the honorable gentleman last up. In a clear and elegant manner, he analyzed the ancient governments mentioned by Dr. Willard, and by comparing them with the proposed system fully demonstrated the superiority of the latter, and in particular the section under debate." [1]

In a further debate on the powers of Congress, Mr. Dench argued, at length, that the powers granted to the central government would dissolve those of the States. To this Mr. Cabot replied by an elaborate argument, and proved to his own and his friends' satisfaction, if not to that of Mr. Dench, the utter fallacy of such views. In the debate on the slave-trade, —

"Mr. Cabot asks the gentleman from Sharon whether in his five hundred miles' travel he saw five thousand people who live as well as five thousand of the lowest sort here. As to the slave-

[1] Mr. Randal, who followed in the debate, does not appear to have received so favorable an impression of Mr. Cabot's efforts as the reporter. Mr. Randal began by saying that ancient history had no more to do with the question in hand than to know how our forefathers dug clams; what he feared was a consolidation of the thirteen States, and an enforcement of Southern customs in New England. History has given a curiously twisted verification of this prediction. The customs of one part of the country have certainly been imposed on the other, but not precisely as Mr. Randal feared. For these debates, see History of Massachusetts Convention, 1788.

trade, the Southern States have the slave-trade, and are sovereign States. The Constitution is the best way to get rid of it." [1]

Mr. Cabot also spoke on a subsequent occasion, with great fulness, on the proposed mode of raising revenue, of which he was particularly competent to judge, and upon which he apparently enlarged.[2] The complete though narrow victory of the Federalists, after these long debates, was a source of great satisfaction to all who had striven for that result. The prize was a large one. Without the adhesion of Massachusetts, the scheme would have been broken down at the start, and the "more perfect union" would have been impossible. The Federalist leaders in Massachusetts were then the rising young lawyers and business men of the community, and were admirably fitted for the work that lay before them. Most of them had passed through the war of Independence, and had shared its privations in one form or another. But they were not the men who had made the war possible. They belonged essentially to the period of construction, which must always follow that of revolution. King, Ames, Parsons, Cabot, and the rest who made their first party fight in this Convention, were far from believing the Constitution to be perfect, although they worked so hard to secure its adoption. On the contrary, they deemed it highly defective. But it was the best that could be done; and the Massachusetts Federalists acted from the beginning on the idea that, imperfect as it was, it must be definitely adopted, and that no half-measures would answer. They rightly believed that, if they failed in this struggle, a miserable disintegration and political ruin were sure to follow. Their policy was a sound one; and they carried their point with great skill and address, but only after an obstinate struggle. The Federalists did not relax their efforts after the actual adoption of the Constitution, but directed them to securing a fair trial for the experiment. They did not neglect to choose good men to

[1] Parsons's Minutes in "Massachusetts Convention, 1788," p. 304.
[2] Ibid., p. 320.

the Senate and to the Congress, to fulfil the difficult task of organizing the new government and setting it in motion. In the adoption of the Constitution, they had taken only the first step. Their struggles in the State Conventions were as nothing to those of the succeeding twelve years, during which the Federalists were destined to firmly found a nation in the midst of the bitterest opposition.

In the month of June, 1789, while the first Congress was sitting, and the organization of the government was still in progress, Mr. Cabot took his wife to New York for the benefit of her health, then far from good. He there passed several weeks, enjoying the society of those friends and political allies to whom he was most attached. Fisher Ames refers to this visit with a pleasure which was probably returned both in anticipation and realization.[1] During the following summer, Washington made his tour through the Eastern States; and on his way from Boston, along the Essex shore, he stopped at Beverly, and breakfasted with Mr. Cabot.[2] To the latter, this visit was the pleasantest, if not the most memorable, incident of that eventful year.

Cabot to Parsons.

Beverly, Feb. 28, 1788.

Dear Sir, — I feel exceedingly disappointed in having you pass this way without stopping. I had so much relied on seeing you, that I could not believe you had left home, until yesterday I was informed that you had been lately *seen* in Boston. I was about to inquire more particularly whether it was *you* or your *ghost;* but, recollecting that to determine this required more than

[1] Life and Works of Fisher Ames, I. 46, 52.

[2] I have mentioned this little incident, not merely because of the compliment to Mr. Cabot thereby conveyed, but also because of the pleasant associations which the anecdote it recalls must always have for me. When a boy, it was my great delight to persuade my grandfather, Mr. Henry Cabot, to tell me how, as a lad of seven, he hid under the side-table in the dining-room of the house at Beverly, in order to get a look at Washington, while he sat at breakfast with his father. The rights of children were not so much respected then as now.

common acuteness of sight and judgment, I waived a question which by confounding my informant might have placed him in a more humiliating point of view than a man is willing to be seen in. However, I am very glad to learn that you are still *in any shape* on this side the Styx; for I had begun very strongly to suspect that the old boatman had tumbled you into his scow, and paddled over the stream. As these apprehensions are of a nature that do not readily subside, I beg, before the old kidnapper takes advantage of you, that you would be doing whatever you have not already done toward rearing the *Conventional Edifice*. The impatience discovered by the few people I converse with stimulated me to set about collecting such materials as were to be procured in this quarter. These I intended should pass your *sole* inspection, and only such of them as you should judge would be useful should be offered to the architects. But, having got into the depth of incertitude as to your *ubiquity*, I forwarded all that I had collected in their rough state to Mr. Minot,[1] with a request that such of them as are not suitable for any part of the building may be used for firewood, which I am sure is much wanted this cold weather. This last reflection is a very consolatory one to me, as I had felt most concern lest my lumber should not only fail of answering any good purpose, but might be prejudicial by incumbering the work-yard. Whereas, if it arrives at the honor of warming the hands of my patriotic friends, and enables them more freely to execute the commands of their heads, I shall be perfectly satisfied. With this sentiment operating in its full force on my mind, I proceed to make a little addition to what I had sent on before.

You will not wonder at the free use I make of *wooden* figures, when you consider how busy I am in preparing timber for the bridge.[2] As to being witty, you know that's so natural to me that it is with difficulty sometimes that I refrain from it. I have at this moment a number of excellent puns; not puny ones, but good substantial ones, big enough to cover this whole paper, which I could very well entertain you with, but that such Parsons as you would, *at the least*, tell them to a certain strong man, in consequence of which I might possibly be pierced through. When you have discovered what may be called the occult meaning of *all* this, with Dr. Swift's leave I may possibly furnish you with more.

[1] George Richards Minot, the historian of Massachusetts.

[2] The Essex Bridge, between Salem and Beverly. Mr. Cabot, as already stated (p. 13), was President of the Bridge Company.

The objection to the fourth section of the first article[1] is stated full as strongly in the paper I sent Mr. Minot, as I remember to have heard or seen it made anywhere; and the argument that the people of one State have an interest in the elections of *every* State may, if placed in the most striking light, be a satisfactory answer. But there is (*in my mind*) ground for an objection to that article which, by going a little further back than the opponents have, may be taken and defended against any thing *I* have ever thought of that could be brought against it. I mean that the objectors, instead of *conceding* as they do, by implication at least, that the powers of that article could not be fixed absolutely in the Constitution, and so reduce the question simply to what body it shall be lodged in; if, instead of this, they should insist that it might and ought to have been fixed immovably in the Constitution, it will be difficult to answer them. For I cannot see why a rule might not have been made of a kind that should answer that description, and yet accommodate itself to the changes of population, &c., in all the different districts. The best answer to this which occurs to me is "that, as the article now stands, the different States may each enjoy their own favorite mode;" but this answer, if pursued, will very much weaken the strongest argument we have ever used in favor of Congress having the right ultimately instead of the States. Pray think of the strongest objection possible to this article; and, if you can answer it satisfactorily, it must be of infinite advantage. I come now to the point for which I have thought it necessary to write to you at this time; and that is, to mention to you the two objections which I am told the people of the country find it the most difficult to get over. The first is that of the fourth section, mentioned in the last page, and which I fear will never be entirely removed. The next is one which seems to me may be pretty fully answered, — that of such a consolidation of the States as will dissolve their governments. Under the head of objections to the Senate, will it not be well to show how far the *injustice* of an equal representation in that body is balanced by the additional security it brings that no measures will ever pass tending in the smallest degree to consolidation, which must be always guarded against by small States? Small States will outnumber great ones. This argument, well managed, in addition to the dependence of the Federal government for the election of all its branches, and the

[1] Section in the Constitution as to regulation of elections to Congress.

express and implied reference to the State governments in various parts of it, will show that the provisions for their existence are interwoven in the Constitution in such a manner as not to be separated without rending it in pieces. I wish you would introduce among the preliminary observations of your address this idea: that the general government, being an institution that is to affect States as well as people, will be obliged to admit into one of its branches that equality which sovereigns independent of each other usually insist on. And there is *some fitness* in the principle which requires that, as the laws affect States as well as people, the consent of States, as such, as well as of individuals, should be first obtained through their [representatives or legislatures?[1]]; and as sovereign States cannot be expected to submit to an entire renunciation of claims which have been, in a degree, sanctified by the language of nations, it is a strong motive why the great States should concede something in this particular.

Verbum sapienti.

I am your sincere friend, GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO BENJAMIN GOODHUE.[2]

BEVERLY, March 16, 1790.

SIR, — The managers of our manufactory have desired me to forward you the enclosed petition, with the request that you would present it as soon as a suitable opportunity offers. It was their intention to have accompanied the petition with a letter to you, explaining more fully the facts it contains, and the objects of their wishes; but Dr. Fisher, to whom this business was assigned, having fallen sick, it remains unperformed. The Doctor wishes you to be informed "that the proprietors have proceeded as far as they have with a full reliance that, if it appeared upon fair experiment to be a practicable and useful manufacture in this country, in our present state, the government would, in some way or another, reimburse them those heavy charges which they have incurred in *introducing it;*" "that the managers have, of themselves, acquired that knowledge and experience in the business which now makes it *certain* that it can be prosecuted with profit to the greatest extent

[1] Doubtful in MS.

[2] Member of Congress for Massachusetts from the Essex district.

by any persons who can have the advantage of our knowledge without much expense;" and therefore "that we cannot reimburse ourselves the great sums we have expended, let the business succeed ever so well among the people at large, who engage in it upon the information we have purchased." You are not ignorant, I believe, that the Worcester people got their machinery made by a man whom we had taught at great expense, and that their carding engine did not consequently cost an eighth part as much as ours; they also took away the second spinner we had instructed. This woman, after having destroyed our materials and enjoyed our support in learning to spin, was bribed to desert us as soon as she could be useful to us. The Rhode Island undertakers have, to a degree, treated us in the same manner; and we have not yet been able to stop this evil which has cost us so much money. We have now about forty people employed, all of whom, except one, are our own country people. Their contracts will expire in succession, and they will diffuse their knowledge and skill through all the States in the Union where manufactories can be carried on. All these things are against *us;* but are they not beneficial to the public in proportion as they are prejudicial to us? We think a fair discussion of our pretensions will show them to be well founded; and that if there be any case in which good policy or public justice (which is always good policy) will dictate the propriety of governmental assistance, it is this case. The infinite importance of a manufacture that will clothe us in this cold climate in winter as well as wool, and which is used universally in warm countries, will be acknowledged by all to give it a stronger claim to public patronage than any other that has been attempted or proposed. The materials being vegetable, and the productions of various countries, may be considered as illimitable in quantity; and such as will, in all human probability, be always at a price in this country as low as in any manufacturing country this side the Cape of Good Hope. The intimate connection and reciprocal benefit that naturally subsist between manufactures and agriculture at this period, between these and commerce and population, and betwixt all of them and a national strength and a productive revenue, will necessarily induce Congress to give the subject a candid examination; but it will always be necessary in a popular assembly that some few persons should take upon themselves the trouble of *thinking* for others. For this reason the managers will be obliged to you for such par-

ticular support and personal attention to the business as you shall think it merits. They flatter themselves with the hope that Congress may, by a lottery, allow them to take a voluntary tax from persons in different parts of the Union *to the amount of their extra expense*, and thus divide among a *greater* number the cost of a benefit that is *common to all.* Mr. Ames is acquainted with many circumstances which it would be tedious to recite in this letter, but which may be convenient to be possessed of: we wish, therefore, you may have an opportunity of consulting with him previous to the introduction of the petition. You may recollect that we engaged in this undertaking in October, 1787. Whether the Philadelphians had then begun, we are unable to say. We did not know of their doing any thing until the spring following; but, be this as it may, we believe that we are the only persons who, at *private* expense, have prosecuted the business to any effect. In Philadelphia, it has been supported by an extensive contribution, and by the aid of their State government, and yet it is trifling there compared with it here. You will find that, in all the countries of Europe where the benefit of this manufacture is enjoyed, great sums have been expended in introducing it, and that these have been borne by the public. In Ireland, a bounty of five per cent, and large grants of money from Parliament, with loans free of interest; and in France the government has continually patronized the undertakers. It will occur to you that the European manufacturer would gladly suppress the efforts we are making, and that a reimbursement of our expenses would be thought a cheap purchase.

I hope Dr. Fisher will be able to write you by next post, in which you may have much information not in my power to give, as to the progress and state of our business.

I am, sir, with much respect, your most obedient servant,

GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO GOODHUE.

BEVERLY, April 6, 1790.

DEAR SIR, — The last post brought me your obliging letter of the 28th ult., since which some private hands have conveyed to us the disagreeable intelligence of your overthrow in the House, and the trials for the non-assumption of the State debts. I never con-

sidered the national government as being more than half established by the *nominal* acceptance of the form. To take from our newspapers the metaphor they have used, it was an arch; but to me the keystone was wanting. The actual exercise of certain powers to the exclusion of the States will be finishing the work. Till this takes place, I cannot think the country completely safe from the danger of division, and consequently anarchy and wretchedness.

I am no holder of public securities of any kind, and never *would be interested* in any of our funds on any terms; but I consider the assumption of all our State debt as so essential, that, as an individual, I would rather pay a fourfold interest through the national government than a half per cent through the medium of the State; because the former *may* give us protection, the latter cannot. I confess to you, however, that I am still indulging myself that you will succeed in this point, in the present session; and, if you do, I shall think that the Government has done every thing its most sanguine friends and every honest patriot could have wished. If you fail, there certainly is reason to apprehend a long and hard contest with the State governments *for power*.

Since our petition was forwarded to you, the people of Lebanon, in Connecticut, have sent for one of our machine-makers, who, I suppose, will go and assist them in setting up a manufactory there. You know the state of the one in Worcester, and that there is one in Providence, and another in Greenwich. All these have the benefit of the knowledge and information we have purchased. An increased duty on importation of such articles as are manufactured here will undoubtedly be of public benefit by promoting these attempts, and, upon principles of sound policy, I think ought to take place; but, upon a little reflection, you will perceive it will be little or no relief *to us*. I am, sir, with much respect,

Your friend and obedient servant,

GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO GOODHUE.

BEVERLY, May 5, 1790.

DEAR SIR, — An invincible indolence of disposition, derived from nature and confirmed by habit, has prevented my acknowledgment of the receipt of your favor of the 17th ult. Having settled it as an irrefragable truth, in my own mind, that the national

government cannot go on without assuming the State debts, I cannot discharge myself of anxiety for the peace of our country until that object is attained. While my pride is gratified to see all New England united in their efforts and wishes to establish this measure, I am at a loss to account for the conduct of some other men whom I have been accustomed to think well of. I can't reconcile Mr. Madison's present conduct with his former principles. I conclude that his principles now do not guide him, or he has changed them. He was once sensible of the folly of such a divided sovereignty as left the supremacy nowhere; and he would then have thought that the powers which must be exercised by the States in providing for their own debts are such as belong to a supreme government only, and cannot be safely left to subordinate ones. While Congress are acting so unworthy of themselves, and of the great trust reposed in them, it is to be apprehended that the anti-Federalists may seize the opportunity of attaching all the State creditors to their cause by providing honestly for them. If they should do this in the State legislatures, the general government would be ruined irrecoverably. The only security that remains seems to be that the members of many of the State governments will not do honestly, even to carry their own points against the national government. Thus we have more to hope from the vices than the virtues of men in some cases. "All Nature's difference keeps all Nature's peace." I hope you will not be wearied out by the perplexities that attend these great questions. The welfare of the community certainly depends upon your success. This idea will animate you to persevere, and, if you die, to fall in the last ditch.

I am, sir, with much respect, your assured friend,

GEORGE CABOT.

CHAPTER III.

1791-1792.

The United States Senate.

In the month of June, 1791, Mr. Cabot was chosen, without opposition, Senator of the United States from Massachusetts, for the full term, to succeed Tristram Dalton. He at once accepted the office, and in the following autumn took his seat. The other Massachusetts senator at this time was Caleb Strong, with whom Mr. Cabot maintained a life-long friendship. Mr. Cabot's services in the State Convention had made him well and widely known; and, after his arrival in Philadelphia, he at once took a high position among the Federalist leaders in the national government. He took the oath of office just in time to be placed upon the committee to draft an address in reply to the President's message. But his services then, as well as during his whole senatorial term, were principally rendered in affairs of commerce and finance. During the session of 1791-92, Mr. Cabot served on the committee on the mint, and on that for establishing a consular system. He was a member of the committee on appropriations, and also chairman of the committee to consider the expediency of legislation, and, if it was thought proper, to report a bill respecting fugitives from justice, and from the service of masters. He also framed and carried through a bill "for the encouragement of the Bank and other cod-fisheries, and for the regulation and government of the fishermen employed therein," and in this connection served as the

chairman of the committee on fisheries. In this, as in all subsequent sessions, Mr. Cabot was most assiduous in his attention to all the duties involved in his office. Invariably present when the session opened, he asked for leave of absence but once during his term of service, and then only to go home and tender his resignation. Mr. Cabot had no fondness for public life; but he had a keen sense of responsibility both to his country and to himself, and, if he undertook to fill an office at all, he gave it his constant care and best attention. How much he felt the then very marked carelessness of senators in regard to their attendance, and the misfortunes involved by continual absences from their posts, is well illustrated by the letter to Mr. Strong, printed at the end of the next chapter.

When Mr. Cabot first took his seat in the Senate, parties had begun to crystallize. The Federalists, from being supporters of the Constitution, had become the supporters of the government. Now, as in the contest for the adoption of the Constitution, they had the advantage of definite objects and settled plans, besides greater ability and a more perfect co-operation than their opponents. As yet the opposition was a loose mass of heterogeneous materials; but in the two first years of the new government they obtained what they most sorely needed, — a great leader. Jefferson, after his return from Europe, had carefully surveyed the political field; and, at the date of Mr. Cabot's election to the Senate, had practically come out as chief of the opposition, though he continued to hold the first cabinet office, and was still a nominal supporter of the administration. With a sure hand, he was engaged in welding the different elements of opposition into the consistent and compact form of a party. By the unerring instinct of a popular leader, Jefferson saw at once the Federalists' advantage in their cry for better government and strong policy. An antidote was needed, and Jefferson furnished it. Shrinking from an attack on Washington, who was upheld and defended by the implicit popular faith,

he struck at the two party leaders, Adams and Hamilton; and, branding them with the stigma of monarchism, rallied his own followers with the democratic shibboleth of fidelity to republican institutions. Party lines were drawn, therefore, with considerable sharpness, during Mr. Cabot's first winter in Philadelphia. The control of both branches of Congress was still in the hands of the Federalists, but their majority in the House had been reduced; and in the Senate, owing to absences and to the uncertain views of some members, the Federalists often carried their point only by the casting vote of the Vice-President. The first party question of this session arose on the apportionment of representatives in accordance with the new census. The small number of representatives had been a fruitful topic of complaint with the opposition, and the House passed a bill which adopted thirty thousand, the lowest number allowed by the Constitution, as the ratio of representation. By this means, the number of the House was raised to one hundred and thirteen, but large fractions in the Northern States were left unrepresented. The Federalists in the Senate, by the Vice-President's casting vote, amended this bill so that the ratio should be thirty-three thousand. A disagreement ensued, and the bill was lost. The House then passed a second bill with the ratio of thirty thousand, but providing for a new census and new distribution before the next Congress. The Federalist senators struck out the provision for the new census and new distribution, and substituted a provision in favor of the unrepresented fractions. This arrangement raised the number of the House to one hundred and twenty, and the bill embodying it was carried: but Washington objected on the score of unconstitutionality, and the measure was lost on reconsideration. A third bill was now introduced in the House, which conformed with the Senate's amendments to the first bill, by making the ratio thirty-three thousand; and this was agreed to. A letter from

Mr. Cabot to his friend, Theophilus Parsons, reveals the motive of the Federalist policy in this matter. The Federalists believed, and justly, that any increase of the representation would be prejudicial to their party. As it was obvious that the representation would have to be enlarged without delay, the exertions of the Federalists were concentrated in an effort to mitigate, as far as possible, the results of such a measure. The ratio of thirty thousand left large unrepresented fractions in the Northern States, the stronghold of Federalism; whereas the ratio of thirty-three thousand absorbed the fractions, or left them in the South only, and thus diminished as much as possible the anti-Federalist effects of the necessary increase in representation. Mr. Cabot supported the Federalist policy strongly, which was saved at the most critical moments only by the casting vote of Mr. Adams.

Mr. Cabot's faith in the government measures rose, doubtless, in no small degree from his relations with their author, Alexander Hamilton, and from his own share in devising them. The Secretary of the Treasury consulted him frequently in regard to the important questions of revenue, so intimately connected with the interests of commerce and manufactures, — subjects on which his judgment was highly esteemed. The financial policy introduced by Hamilton was soon strained to the utmost by having to provide for the increased army which St. Clair's defeat rendered necessary; and Mr. Cabot's bill for the encouragement of the fisheries, to which allusion has just been made, formed at this juncture a part of Hamilton's general scheme. The pecuniary value of the fisheries was enhanced by their importance as a nursery for seamen, an object appealing strongly to the Federalists, whose policy included, among its objects of first necessity, the establishment of a navy. The problem Mr. Cabot undertook to solve by his bill was the preservation and encouragement of the fisheries, without causing thereby, at a time when every dollar was of impor-

tance, any diminution of the revenue arising from the salt duties. What he did substantially was to encourage the fishing interest by a bounty on the vessels, and replace this bounty to the government by abolishing the drawback on salt. In this way the objects of the bill were effected.[1] In the party struggle which arose on the question of coinage, Mr. Cabot, as a member of the Senate committee on the mint, was especially interested. The bill for the mint originated in the Senate, and provided that on one side of the coin the head of the President, for the time being, should be stamped. This harmless provision caused a most violent debate in the House. Rallying to the cry of monarchy, the Republicans, after a good deal of frothy eloquence, amended the bill by substituting a figure of Liberty for the President's head, as the device on the coin. To this amendment the Senate, in the end, very wisely agreed, and put a stop to the useless discussion which had been excited. In this session, too, the first indications of the strife engendered by the evil influences of the French Revolution were apparent in the debate as to the phraseology of the answer congratulating the French government on the adoption of their new constitution.

Mr. Cabot served on all the committees on claims, and on those appointed to deal with questions relating to the revenue. In those days, before the era of standing committees, special ones were appointed to report on every question that arose; and, as a majority of these questions related to the revenue and to finance, Mr. Cabot was constantly employed. It would therefore be tedious beyond measure to enumerate all the various committees on which he served, and I have contented myself with alluding to the more important ones, and with endeavoring to define so far as possible, from the slender information conveyed by barren journals, the position occupied by Mr. Cabot in his party, and the nature of the official services he was called upon to render.

The session of 1791-92, if compared with those which

[1] See below, p. 113, letters to Sewall.

followed, was an extremely peaceable one; but observing men already detected the dark clouds gathering upon the political horizon.

Cabot to Washington.[1]

Beverly, January 29, 1791.

Sir, — Mr. William Kirkpatrick, a member of the house of Messieurs Grivegnée & Co., of Malaga, wishes to have the honor of serving the United States in the character of consul for that port. Should it be thought expedient to institute such an office, it *may* be found that Mr. Kirkpatrick's situation as well as talents and disposition peculiarly enable him to fill it with propriety. Permit me therefore, sir, to request that, when the qualifications of candidates are under your examination, *his* also may be considered.

If any apology is necessary for this freedom, I hope it may not be deemed insufficient that, having been led by my profession to make frequent visits to Spain, among other intimacies I formed one with the principals of the commercial establishment to which Mr. Kirkpatrick belongs; that *these* have desired my testimony on this occasion, and that my experience of their integrity and their friendship to the people of this country constrains me to think well of a gentleman they recommend, and to confide in one for whose faithfulness they are willing to be responsible.

I am, with the most profound respect, sir,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,

George Cabot.

The President of the United States.

Cabot to Hamilton.

Beverly, Sept. 6, 1791.

Dear Sir, — Being absent from home when your letter of the 25th ultimo arrived, it has been out of my power to answer the inquiries it contains until this day's post.

[1] I have inserted this letter simply as an illustration of the conception of the civil service, entertained by senators in 1791, and also as showing the relation to the President which senators thought they held with regard to such appointments.

Almost four years have expired since a number of gentlemen in this place associated for the purpose of establishing a manufactory of cotton goods, of the kinds usually imported from Manchester, for men's wear. The various parts of this complex manufacture are performed by machines, some of which are very intricate, and others delicate. A want of skill in constructing the machinery and of dexterity in using it, added to our want of a *general* knowledge of the business we had undertaken, have proved the principal impediments to its success.

Destitute of the necessary information ourselves, we were subject to be misled by every pretender to knowledge. A number of Europeans, chiefly Irish, have been successively employed by us; but as no one of them was master of any branch of the business, and most of them proved deficient in some quality essential to usefulness, one only has remained in our service.

Satisfied from experience that we must at last depend on the people of the country *alone* for a solid and permanent establishment, we have for a long time directed our efforts to their instruction, so that, of the forty persons now employed in our workshop, thirty-nine are natives of the vicinity.

Our machines are: —

1 carding-engine, which with the labor of 1 man, cards 15 lbs. per day, and with the labor of 2 men is capable of carding 30 lbs. per day.
9 spinning-jennies, of 60 to 84 spindles each.
1 doubling and twisting machine, constructed on the principle of the jenny.
1 slubbing-machine or coarse jenny, to prepare the ropings for the finest jennies, whereon they are fitted for doubling and twisting.
1 warping-mill sufficient to perform this part of the work for a very extensive manufactory.
16 looms with flying-shuttles, 10 of which are sufficient to weave all the yarn our present spinners can finish.
2 cutting-frames, with knives, guides, &c.
1 burner and furnace, with apparatus to singe the goods.
Apparatus for coloring, drying, &c.

A summary of our accounts, lately exhibited by the managers, shows our actual expenditures to have been about $14,000, against

which may be placed, — buildings, &c., worth as they cost	$3,000
Machinery and apparatus now worth	2,000
Goods and unwrought materials	4,000
Sunk in waste of materials, extraordinary cost of first machines, in maintaining learners and compensating teachers, &c.	5,000
	$14,000

It should be noticed, however, that the Legislature of Massachusetts having granted aids in land and lottery tickets, that may amount to about $4,000, the neat loss to the proprietors may be estimated at only $10,000 actual money, and the interest on their advances for about two years.

At present, we manufacture at the rate of 8,000 to 10,000 yards per annum, worth in the market on an average three-sixths. These goods cost us three per cent, without adding any thing for the use of that part of the capital which is constituted by buildings, machinery, and apparatus. If the proper allowance for rent and repair of these be added, it would raise the cost of the goods six per cent higher, which is indeed the true cost, and is equal to what they bring in the market. The enclosed specimens numbered 1 and 2 show the proficiency we had made two years ago; and by comparing with these the other specimens on the same paper, which were executed lately, may be readily seen the improvement we have made since that period.

With respect to our future prospects, they are less discouraging than they have been. We have subdued the greatest difficulties, and we shall not be exposed again to many extravagant charges which heretofore have swallowed up our funds without any reproduction. Many expenses, such as the rent of buildings, wages of the dyer, compensation to managers, and some others, will remain nearly the same, though the scale of business should be greatly increased; consequently, the proportion chargeable on each yard of goods will be lessened as the whole work extends. Beside, we are not without expectation of placing many parts of the work in private families, where we can avail ourselves of the cheapness of household labor. Our machinery has been bad and dear: it is now perfectly well made and cheap. Our artists have been learning their trades at our expense. Their work is now

worth more than it costs; and, as they improve in skill and adroitness, we expect that they will perform more and better work for the same compensation.

On a comparison of the prices of labor in this country with those of Great Britain, we perceived that although the wages of *common labor* is much higher here, yet that of *artificers* is not. Here the demand for labor is chiefly for agriculture, and the wages seem to be regulated by it. There the mechanic arts afford so much employment that the demand for every species of skill and ingenuity is constant and high.

Hence it happens that we can satisfy our artists with wages very little above the common labor of the country, while those who come from Europe will not work without a much greater price.

It is on considerations of this kind that our hopes principally rest, and with these ideas we shall proceed to extend our business as fast as we can train the laborers to the proper execution of the work. This, however, must be very slowly, as the heavy losses on ill-wrought goods discourage extension beyond a very limited ratio.

We have yet had no experience of the cotton of the Southern States; but it appeared early to be essential to our interest to use cotton of the longest fibre and the best cleaned. That of Cayenne, Surinam, and Demerara, has been preferred, though at a price two or three pence higher than the cotton of the islands. In proportion as our workers are awkward and unskilful is the necessity of furnishing the best materials. Bad materials would be wasted altogether. At present, we wish to have the cotton that grows nearest to the equator; but, when our spinners are more perfect, an inferior kind may perhaps be wrought with advantage.

With the highest respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO HAMILTON.

OCT. 8, 1791.

DEAR SIR, — I have understood that after the peace of 1763, and till the late war, France gave direct assistance to her codfishery beside the monopoly of her *home* and colonial markets; but,

notwithstanding these encouragements, the supply from her own fishery was so scanty that her prohibitory laws were evaded, and very large supplies of foreign fish were continually smuggled into her colonies, and consumed there at prices forty per cent higher to the planters than English and American fish was worth at the free ports in the neighboring islands.

Since the peace of 1783, fish of the United States has not been wholly prohibited; but its admission has been generally confined to a single port in an island (sometimes very distant from the consumers). The duty demandable on each quintal has been from three to eight livres, and the amount actually paid from two and a half to three; while the French fish has enjoyed a free access to every place, and upon landing has been entitled to a very liberal bounty. Yet, under all these disadvantages, the fishery of the United States *has* successfully rivalled that of France.

These facts, at first view, seem to indicate such a preponderance of natural advantages in the United States for carrying on the fishery as can hardly be balanced by France; but it should be noticed that, about five years ago, the French West India markets were surcharged to such a degree that the exporters of fish from the United States suffered great losses upon all they shipped thither, and the fishery exhibited such symptoms of decline in consequence of it that it may be doubted whether it could possibly have been supported, if that of France had not been interrupted by the commotions at home. It should be observed, too, that the equipments of armed fleets and appearances of war occur so frequently to the European nations, and especially to France, that no fair experiment can be tried to determine the extent to which their fishery would be carried in a long period of uninterrupted pursuit. These and similar events, however, have great influence upon the fishery of the United States; but their frequency and effect in future can neither be foreseen nor accurately estimated, and hence it is the more difficult to say "what is the greatest disparity of duties the fish of the United States could bear, and meet the fish of France in the French market;" but, on the whole, should the government of the United States restore to their cod-fisheries in some direct form the full amount which they pay to its treasury, by the consumption of dutied articles, and should the fisheries of France be left without aid from their government, except, like those of the United States, a bare indemnity from contribution to

the public revenue, should the markets of the French West Indies be open to the fish of both countries, I think it may be safely relied on that the fish of the United States could be afforded full ten per cent cheaper than that of France, and consequently could bear a duty of ten per cent on its value at the place and time of sale, and yet sustain the competition with French fish selling in the same market duty free.

I have thus, my dear sir, given you the best opinion I can form at present on the subject of your inquiry. This I have done, not with the expectation of adding to your information, but solely to show my readiness to obey your commands, and to convince you of the esteem and respect with which

I am very sincerely your assured friend and most obedient servant, GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO HAMILTON.

DEC. 18, 1791.

DEAR SIR, — It is well stated by a gentleman, who has examined the subject, that in 1784 the British government, having taken measures for drawing over to their service the whale-fishermen of the United States, the government of France at once saw the danger of suffering her great maritime rival to acquire the advantage of four or five thousand excellent seamen, and with them an art of immense value in marine consideration (as the nursery of sailors), which they possessed almost exclusively.

France, therefore, did not hesitate to arrest these proceedings by giving *informal* but strong assurances that, if the whale-fishermen would but for a moment reject the temptations held out by the English, their friends in France would soon procure for them advantages superior to those they were required to refuse. Accordingly, liberal bounties in money, accompanied with other allurements, were offered to those persons who would remove from the United States to Dunkirk, and from thence carry on the whale-fishery.

This measure at first did not have all the effect expected from it; and, rather than hazard the immigration of the fishermen of the dominions of Britain, it was thought expedient to create in France a market for the produce of the whale-fishery of the United States. This has been of much benefit to us; but partly

from the fluctuating policy of France toward us, and partly from the excessive premiums she gives to her own vessels, it is to be feared that her whale-fishery will be eventually established on the ruins of ours. Already this business has extended itself considerably at Dunkirk, and the enormous profits which have been made by the aid of public bounties cannot fail to draw from the United States many more adventures.

France is undoubtedly an important market for tobacco, rice, lumber, oil, and *occasionally* for some other articles; but the ordinance of the National Assembly, requiring that after October, 1791, tobacco in American ships should pay 6¼ livres per quintal, duty, more than in French ships (equal to near double freight), and determining, also, that after that period American-built vessels cannot be sold to the citizens of France, must render our trade to that country in our own bottoms comparatively small.

In the course of the late war, France opened the ports of her colonies to foreign ships. These very soon engrossed a large share of their trade; and soon after the peace an *arrêt* of the Council of State was passed, restricting the intercourse between those colonies and strangers.

The precise intent or effect of this first public regulation after the peace is not within my present recollection, and I have no authority to which I can recur; but soon after it (in 1784) another *arrêt* was published, which established in each of the Windward Islands one port, and in Hispaniola three ports, to which *foreign* vessels might have free access with fish, lumber, live stock, rice, Indian corn, salted beef (but not pork), vegetables of a certain kind, hides, peltry, pitch, tar, and turpentine, but no other commodities; the duty on fish to be three livres per quintal, and on fatted beef three livres per barrel, and on all these commodities such local duties as might be imposed in the islands, beside an established one per cent on the value.

In return, and as payment for these commodities, molasses and rum of the islands, and *goods previously imported from France*, are the only articles allowed to be brought away.

Several years after the second *arrêt*, a third passed, raising the duty on salted beef to a dollar per barrel, and on fish to a dollar per quintal, and at all times a sum equal to the duty per quintal imposed on foreign fish was given as a bounty on each quintal of fish of the French fisheries.

Although some important products of the United States are excluded by the *arrêts*, or standing laws, yet the pressing wants of the colonists have occasionally induced a suspension of those laws in relation to particular articles; but so versatile has been the conduct of the French Government in this part of their administration that the people of the United States have sometimes suffered exceedingly, though perhaps oftener profited by these temporary indulgences. Since the commencement of the Revolution in France, and partly in consequence of scarcity there, the colonists have been obliged to take from the United States large supplies of flour, and some other items not usually admitted.

The importance of the French West India market for the fish of the United States will appear from observing that nearly one half of the whole fish is consumed there: should this advantage be lost, the fishery would be almost, if not quite, ruined. The molasses received from the French islands is an excellent payment for what they buy of us; but it may be noted that this article has been raised to its value and consequence as an object of commerce chiefly, if not altogether, by the people of the United States. It was not thought to be worth saving by the French planters until the Anglo-Americans became its purchasers and created a demand for it. At the commencement of the molasses trade with the French, it was bought by the tun, supposed to measure sixty gallons, and by the hogshead, supposed to contain one hundred. The New England people at that time used to receive upwards of ninety gallons for a tun and one hundred and fifty for a hogshead: so little was it valued by the planters, that they for a long time submitted to this imposition in the measure.

It has been much complained of that at Cape Francis bonds are required before a vessel is allowed to trade, with such sureties as cannot be had unless the captain pays an extravagant commission on his whole cargo to some merchant of the place, whether he needs any other aid of such merchant or not. What share of this abuse, or whether any, is chargeable to the government, I am unable to say; or whether it extends to the other parts of Hispaniola I am uncertain, but I think it does.

I am not able to discern any essential difference of *principle* between the French and English colonial systems: both aim at a monopoly of their trade, but neither can effect it perfectly without ruining the colony; each, therefore, relaxes occasionally in some

points, and constantly in others, according to the necessity of the case. Both nations admit *nearly* the same commodities, except that France takes fish and refuses flour, while England takes flour and refuses fish.

England, being more solicitous as well as more able to carry the supplies of her colonies than she is to furnish them, insists only on being the carrier.

France, being unable to carry the requisite supplies of her colonies, insists only on furnishing them so far as she can, and permits others to supply whatever of prime necessity she cannot supply herself.

The English reserve the exclusive right of carrying the commodities their colonists need from the United States; but they impose no duty on the importation of the commodities themselves.

The French *allow foreigners* to *carry* certain commodities which their colonies need; but they impose a duty on the most valuable of those commodities greater than the whole freight or price of carriage is worth.

The French colonies are, I believe, more extensive than the English; but, if the French had not from necessity taken some things which they legally prohibit, it may be doubted whether the exports of the United States to the British West Indies would not equal the exports to the French West Indies.

Some unavoidable business and some unavoidable dissipations have prevented me till this moment from obeying your commands. Upon a review of what I have written, 'tis some consolation, in seeing how unimportant the information is, that you have lost nothing by the delay.

I am, &c., GEORGE CABOT.

STEPHEN HIGGINSON TO CABOT.

BOSTON, 1792.

DEAR GEORGE, — I received yours, enclosing your observations relative to our trade with the British and French in Europe and in the West Indies; and I think they are just, showing very clearly the advantages and inconveniences attending both. They are alike attentive in all their regulations to their own interest, or what they conceive to be such; and, in every instance, discover that to promote their own trade, and to encourage their navigation, is their only object.

This is the only natural or proper principle by which to arrange their commercial regulations; and we have no right to expect of either of them any indulgence, which will not lead either directly or remotely to their object. We ought not to ask of either an indulgence which may injure them in one point, without offering them a benefit that will fully balance every probable disadvantage. Commercial arrangements between nations as well as individuals are the subject of fair, open calculation; and, in forming them, both parties ought to be fully satisfied that the bargain will prove an equal one, before they definitely close it.

Political advantages, such as guarantee of territory, an alliance offensive and defensive, support in case of invasions, &c., may be given and received in return for particular advantages in commerce, which would otherwise be confessedly unequal. But as we have a full compensation in kind to offer for every commercial privilege we want from others, and can have no possible advantage from blending commerce and politics in any negotiations, I presume that we shall not be misled or drawn aside from the path of safety and interest by any attempts of others to combine and confound objects which ought ever to be separately considered.

You have stated generally and rightly the advantages we have derived from our intercourse both with the French and British, in Europe and in the West Indies, and have reverted to the principles and objects which seem to have directed them both in their indulgences and restrictions.

In France, we, in common with other foreigners, have the liberty of freighting from port to port in their dominions; but this has proved no benefit to us, the freights being low and not very frequent, nor have our vessels availed themselves of the liberty in many instances. Much, however, may be said of this indulgence, though the British also enjoy it with others.

Our whale-fishery is no doubt injured by the establishment at Dunkirk; and it is clearly the intention of France to transfer this business eventually from us to themselves. Their present apparent indulgence to us, as to oil, is clearly to keep our whale-men at home, till they shall have had time to get prepared for their reception and employment; and, as they shall be able, they will by degrees certainly draw them over to France.

To withdraw their present encouragement to our oil would be to hazard a transfer of the fishery from us to the British; and if

our men are once transplanted, and the business get into the hands of Britain, it will be wholly lost both to us and France.

Such are the views of France, I suppose, in their arrangements as to our oil and whale fishery; and having secured Mr. Rotch and others, who are best acquainted with it, they can measure the exact degree of support necessary to keep it up here, till they shall be prepared to transfer it to France.

If we could induce the British to receive our sperm oils, as formerly, which would not much interfere with their Greenland fishery, or if they would take it at three to five pounds duty per ton, we could then extend that branch and support the fishery, and take our chance for a market for the common oil, which now finds a vent in the West Indies and Ireland to a large amount, and will daily increase.

It is much better for both Britain and France to have that fishery remain with us, than to be transferred to either of them to the injury of the other; and it seems to me that they may, upon this subject, be played off against each other with advantage. But, unless something be done to give the business a new face, France will, with the advantages she now has, eventually gain it wholly from us.

As to the cod-fishery, I think that is safe and will succeed with us, in spite of them all; and the bill [1] you sent me will tend very much to secure and extend it. I have shown it to E. Parsons, and some from Gloucester, who think, with me, that it will very much benefit that branch, and contains every security and aid which can be desired. The bounty on tonnage instead of the fish will prevent much fraud, and will save a great expense, in fees to officers, &c., and prove more beneficial both to owners and men.

I cannot think that an exclusion of our fish from direct importation into the French islands would be very alarming. If the consumption of it in them could be prevented, we should have much to fear; but that is impossible, for they cannot support their slavery without it. They have no substitute; and we should supply it as formerly through the neutral islands, with as much benefit to ourselves as we now derive from the direct supply.

Those islands have experienced an immense saving by the admission of our exports direct. It is this which has made them thrive so surprisingly, and increase their cultivations and the numbers of their slaves. Those cultivations must be continued. Their slaves

[1] See above, pp. 38, 41.

must be fed, and with their present habits and ideas as well, at least, as heretofore; but this can be done only by the use of our fish, which they must have directly and cheap, or through the neutral islands, at an advanced price.

The French will reluctantly abandon their settlements for the cod-fishery. They must keep up the appearance, at least, of supporting them; and if they would admit our fish paying ten per cent duty, and give no bounty on their own, or receive ours free and allow a bounty of ten per cent on theirs, I would ask no better terms. They would be better than we have enjoyed for years, and would enable us to supply exclusively in a short time. The French will, as well as the British, exclude such of our exports as interfere with their own; and both will be the carriers of all they want, as far as they can be. France cannot interrupt us much as carriers. Britain will be our rivals in many cases.

France has been versatile in her commercial intercourse with us, being not well versed in the subject of commerce, and from the fluctuating state of her government for several years past.

Britain has been out of humor, and disposed to gain every advantage of us, by trying projects, and proving the wisdom and stability of our government.

But matters are now closing to a point. They have both experienced our wisdom, firmness, and resources; and both must now wish for permanent and equal terms of future intercourse.

It is our part to see that we have a full equivalent for all we grant, that our bargains with all be equal. Why should either of them be allowed to carry our produce to foreign markets direct, without giving us an equivalent, and what shall that be? To give us the same liberty in their ports will not do, because the amount they have to export in transient or mere freighting ships bears no proportion to ours, most of their exports being taken off in ships belonging to the importer or exporter, or their connections; so that transient ships get very little freight in their ports to other ports of Europe, nor have the Americans obtained any such freights worth attending to since their independence. We would have some indulgence in the sale of our exports with them, or the importation of their exports, to serve as an equivalent, or else be admitted to some special intercourse with their colonies. France will not furnish us with an extensive market for any of the American exports, save tobacco. Ireland this year has taken near as

many tons of our common whale-oil as France: to the former, our export of it is rapidly increasing; to the latter, it has lessened. The French markets take no great quantity of rice and ashes; and their demand for our wheat, flour, &c., will depend, as in England, upon their own crops. Our beef, butter, and pork have not found as yet any sale in France of consequence.

Their prejudice in favor of the Irish articles and against ours has in part prevented it; but their demand for those articles in general seems to be very small.

Upon the whole, I see not that the trade to France is so very important to us. Tobacco, which is the great article they do and will continue to receive from us, they have endeavored to monopolize the freight of; and, excepting that and oil, they admit all the American exports in any foreign vessels, as in ours.

The trade to their colonies is much more important to us; in this State, however, as little so as any, because we can supply them through the neutral islands, our exports being more essentially necessary to them than those from the other States.

It is not easy to settle the comparative importance to those two countries, or to us, of our trade with them and their colonies. Their connection with and the advantage to us is very wide, and arises from different sources. With the French, our best trade is in their colonies; with the British, in Europe.

From the former, we want indulgences in the West Indies; from the latter, in Europe. The most valuable articles wanted in the British islands are from those States who are not anxious about the carrying of them; and the bulky articles of lumber and stock which they take from this State we could not make much profit upon, having no molasses to take in return, nor any articles that will afford much profit; but in Europe our trade with the British is vastly important.

England and Ireland are the greatest markets for our most valuable exports, either for consumption or re-exportation; and the British have done us the favor of confining the importation of them to their own vessels and ours.

The articles most wanted in the French islands are drawn chiefly from this State; and they are willing we should be the carriers of them. To us, this trade is very important: it is the great support of our cod-fishery; and we have for its continuance the security of its being indispensable to them, and the certainty of

supplying them in our own vessels, directly or indirectly. There is, therefore, no ground for much apprehension of our losing it, nor any reason for our giving up any great points to retain it.

They may claim some good equivalent, should they indulge the importation of flour and meat, &c., steadily and without interruption; but as this would interrupt, if not supplant, their supplies from France, it cannot be expected; and we ought not to pay much for the liberty of supplying them only when their necessities oblige them to look abroad for food.

The imposition of duties on our exports in either France or Britain may or may not be injurious to us. If we can rely on the general principle of the consumer's paying them when duties are so high as to discourage the use of the article; if it be imposed on our exports, but not on those of other foreigners, so as to support a rival; or if it be imposed to increase the production of the article with success within themselves, — in all these cases, the duty will prove injurious to us. But where it is imposed on an article necessary to themselves, in which they cannot be our rivals; when all foreigners pay alike, and the duty be not so high as to discourage the use of the article, — in these cases, I would not pay much for an exemption, unless it be an exclusive one, and where we had a rival.

I expect there will be much management, and much party spirit exhibited in adjusting our commercial intercourse with Britain and France. But if a fair bargain be the object of the parties, and the negotiators act honestly and are well informed, the business may be settled easily to the benefit and satisfaction of all. The greatest difficulties that can arise will be from treaties pre-existing with others, which must be attended to; and these will make it necessary, in some cases, to extend or restrict beyond what would otherwise be eligible.

I wish you well through the business. The secretary and others of you will have only right objects in view, and will attend to the subject with candor; but others again will enter upon it replete with prejudice, and with all the zeal of party men or interested agents.

We are all well here, and at Beverly; and, wishing you many Happy New Years,

I remain yours affectionately,

STEPHEN HIGGINSON.

P. S. I give you the above ideas just as they were in writing: they will, however, be of the same use to you, as if reduced to system and more clearly conveyed. The imposition you speak of in the Cape is winked at, if not worse, by the government there; but it exists nowhere except in Hispaniola, and is not bottomed upon any demands at home.

Cabot to Parsons.

(*Confidential.*)

Beverly, Oct. 3, 1792.

Dear Sir, — It has been generally supposed that the increase of representation in the national government will be an increase of opposition, at least so far as relates to the Southern States. It must occasion some anxiety to the friends of the Union that, although Connecticut and Rhode Island will send all good men, and Massachusetts likewise, yet a majority may be found in the new House whose principles will lead them to measures injurious, and perhaps ruinous, to the Federal government. You need not be told that your friend Benson[1] will decline the future service, as will Mr. Lawrence,[2] Mr. William Smith,[3] and Mr. Barnwell.[4] But perhaps you are not yet informed that in Pennsylvania and New York the opponents are well combined, and are incessantly active; while the friends discover a want of union and a want of energy. I am informed, in a manner that is satisfactory, that a very serious effort will be made to prevent the re-election of Mr. Adams; that in New York, where the electors are to be appointed by the Legislature, every artifice will be practised to procure the appointment of such persons only as will agree to degrade Mr. Adams; that Governor Clinton is invited to stand a candidate for the Vice-Presidency, but, if he refuses, the same party in Pennsylvania and New York are to fix on a new candidate of similar principles, and that he will be supported by the influence of all the Virginian and other malcontents. The ruin of Mr. Adams would

[1] Egbert Benson, of New York, at this time member of Congress, and afterwards Judge of New York Supreme Court and United States Circuit Court.

[2] John Lawrence, member of Congress from New York, 1789–93; United States Judge of the New York District Court, 1794; United States Senator, 1796–1800.

[3] William Loughton Smith, of South Carolina. He remained in Congress until 1799, when he was appointed minister to Portugal by John Adams.

[4] Robert Barnwell, member of Congress from South Carolina, 1791–93.

be a triumph of the *Jacobins*, and would be an important step toward that general overthrow of our establishment which is evidently intended. With these ideas upon his mind, a friend has written by the last post to know of me whether Massachusetts will send *all* men of right principle and good abilities, and especially whether she will send Mr. Parsons, whose assistance will be prodigiously important, and whose talents ought not to be withheld. I only answer as you answered me, "that your family and subsistence could not be abandoned." It is, however, exceedingly to be lamented that you cannot or will not come to our help.

You will recollect, among the late addresses of Governor Clinton, the name of our old friend Osgood:[1] he is now and has indeed long been considered as deep in the principles of that party. Is it not probable that he may beat up for troops in this quarter to serve *them* the next campaign? My neighbor D. would probably aid his designs. Some attention, therefore, will be necessary to secure the choice of good electors as well as representative. I cannot, with propriety, take any part in these proceedings; but my concern for the public welfare leads me inevitably to communicate to a few confidential friends such information as I may have of the movements of the opposition, and as they may be supposed to desire. You have withdrawn yourself from the circle of politics; but you will often be in contact with those who are within it, and will impress those whom you touch. It cannot but happen, therefore, that you will do much good without great trouble to yourself.

I am, with very great respect,

Your friend and obedient servant,

GEORGE CABOT.

[1] Samuel Osgood, of Massachusetts. He had been a member of the Continental Congress, and had served with distinction in the war for Independence. Had also been first commissioner of the Treasury, 1785–89; and from 1789–91 was postmaster-general of the United States; afterward, speaker of the New York Assembly.

CHAPTER IV.

1792–1796.

The United States Senate.

BEFORE Mr. Cabot returned to Philadelphia, in the autumn of 1792, party strife had become much embittered. Jefferson's first attempts against the Federalists had been made in the shape of indirect attacks on them in letters to Washington. Powerful and adroit as Jefferson always was in swaying the minds of men by well-directed appeals to the passions and by covert insinuations, his arts proved vain when applied to the President. The wild though ingenious chimeras of "a monarchical faction" and "a corrupt Treasury squadron," conjured up by Jefferson, were useless before the sound judgment and strong understanding of Washington. The President refused to withdraw his confidence from men in whom he had every reason to trust, and with whose measures he agreed, in order to bestow it on Jefferson, tricked out for the moment in the novel garb of a defender of the Constitution. Baffled in this attempt, Jefferson turned to a more sympathetic audience. By his assistance, Philip Freneau established the "National Gazette," intended to be the organ of the opposition, and the means of public attacks upon the Federalist policy and upon the characters of its promoters. Although imbued with a just hatred of newspaper conflict, Jefferson was always ready to have some one else use that powerful engine in his behalf. He never shrank from thrusting a friend, whether Madison or Freneau, into the thickest of a fight, from which he himself wisely held aloof.[1] Fren-

[1] Jefferson to Madison, Jefferson's Works, IV. 121.

eau's unceasing and bitter attacks on the Treasury and the whole financial system at last roused Hamilton, never the coolest of men, and now enraged beyond endurance, both by the nature of the assault and by the character of its real author. Hamilton made a grievous mistake when he descended into the arena of the press; for, though he drove Jefferson from the field temporarily, he sullied the dignity of his own high office by the violence of newspaper controversy. It was the first step in the course which led the Federalists to the extreme measures that ultimately proved their ruin. The conflict between the hostile leaders assumed a personal tone, which rapidly spread to their friends and parties. Washington strove to allay the storm, but it had gone beyond even his control; and Jefferson soon announced his fixed determination to retire from the cabinet. Other events conspired to deepen the contest. The second Presidential election had just occurred. The great name of Washington rendered a struggle for the first place impossible; but the opposition had rallied on the question of the Vice-Presidency. By better combination than they had hitherto attained, the self-styled "Republicans" succeeded in casting fifty votes for George Clinton, against seventy-seven for John Adams.[1] A much more serious affair, in its ultimate consequences, was the resistance to the whiskey tax. The President's proclamation sufficed to quell the disturbances in North Carolina; but the turbulent population of the western counties of Pennsylvania were not to be so easily put down. The resistance there had a very ugly

[1] This comparative closeness of Adams's and Clinton's vote is the theme of one of Jefferson's most amusing and ingenious tales. Dec. 26, 1797: "Langdon tells me that, at the second election of President and Vice-President of the United States, when there was a considerable vote given to Clinton in opposition to Mr. Adams, he took occasion to remark it in conversation in the Senate Chamber with Mr. Adams, who, gritting his teeth, said: 'Damn 'em, damn 'em, damn 'em! You see that an elective government will not do.'" — *Jefferson's Works*, IX. 187.

appearance, and already threatened the insurrection which soon afterwards actually broke out.

Party feeling, therefore, ran very high when the last session of the Second Congress opened; and the events which ensued were not calculated to abate it. The comparative mildness of the previous session had disappeared, and was not destined to revive for many years.

This increase of political animosity was publicly perceptible only in the House, where the opposition, guided by their master, made a concentrated attack on Hamilton. The first effort against the Federalist leader was a demand for the speedy payment of the debt. Hamilton readily acquiesced. There was nothing he more desired; and he suggested additional taxes for the purpose. This proposition cooled the ardor of the gentlemen who were anxious to fix on Hamilton the charge of saddling the country with an irredeemable debt. They therefore shifted their ground; and their next attempt was far more bitter toward their opponent, and more discreditable to themselves. Giles, put forward by Jefferson and Madison, made an attack on Hamilton's personal integrity. The only results of this assault were renewed confidence in Hamilton, and the temporary obliteration of the wretched tool whom the principal contrivers had used.

Fiercely as the conflict raged in the House, it apparently did not as yet disturb the calmness of the Senate. Mr. Cabot's services in this session did not differ materially from those of the last. He appears on all the committees on claims, and on all appointed to consider questions of revenue and finance. He was again on the committee of the mint, and also on that to regulate the value of foreign coinage. He also reported in this session two bills, one of which was fated to play a most important part in our future history. This was the bill to regulate the capture and delivery of fugitives from justice. At the time, it passed without much comment; but, after many vicissitudes, it was

destined to reappear, more than half a century later, in the portentous form of the Fugitive Slave Law. Mr. Cabot's other bill was to regulate the registration of fishing vessels, — a measure important to New England interests.

Washington entered on his second term March 4, 1793; and the Senate, after a brief special session, adjourned. The members had hardly reached their homes, when the news of Genet's arrival became generally known. To trace the course of that feather-headed Frenchman in America, to enumerate the insults which he heaped upon our government, or to depict the troubles in which he involved the administration, is neither pleasant nor in this place necessary. The foreign influence, so much dreaded by the Federalists, had come from a quarter where they had not looked for it, and in a shape they could never have imagined. The result was fatal to them in the end. That party which bent most servilely to foreign influence, which introduced it the first, and maintained it the longest, was to suffer the least from its own follies. Whereas the Federalists, the corner-stone of whose policy was resistance to foreign intervention, were driven by the course of their opponents into a reaction so violent that they rivalled the democratic love of France in their own admiration of England. But to Jefferson and his followers belongs the sole glory of introducing foreign influences into our politics. Adoration of France produced worship of England; and both brought a curse upon our politics, and warped public sentiment among men of every shade of belief for the next twenty-five years. With Genet, this wretched business began. The contagion, under the benign influence of the French envoy, spread rapidly; and the feelings it excited among the Federalist leaders are not, at this day, easy to understand. In the first place, the event which they had always most dreaded was actually upon them. Foreign influence was in their midst, and alien politics supplanted those of native growth. They knew such a state of things

to be morbid and unhealthy. But they soon forgot the broad and fundamental objection to the introduction of French policy, in the hatred and disgust which that policy itself excited. To these men, the friends of order, who had just rescued the country from the anarchy of the Confederation, came the spectre of French democracy. Not the constitutional freedom which they venerated; not the well-ordered State which they sought to construct; not the liberty for which they had fought the War of Independence, — none of these principles were supported by France. The French liberty was a totally different thing. France preached license, not freedom; substituted names for realities; and, redressing wrongs by indiscriminate massacre, set up a tyranny ten times worse than the one she had thrown down. To the Federalists in America, comprising many of the best political thinkers of that age, the spectacle of French anarchy seemed to betoken, as plainly as the setting sun foretells the approach of night, the coming of French despotism. And it was this sham liberty, beginning in fine words and ending in confusion, shame, and tyranny, which they now saw imported amongst them. As they watched these delusions spread, and Jacobin clubs rise up, with all the vile paraphernalia of liberty-poles and red caps, the Federalists roused to a vigorous and bitter resistance. "Anti-Federalists," now changed to "Jacobins" and "Anarchists," was retorted to the accusations of monarchy, with right good will. Yet the hands of the Federalists were hampered in dealing with their enemies. The memory of French succor during the Revolution was still fresh; and this restrained the Federalists at a time when the current was setting against them with a force which demanded their most unrestricted efforts. Mr. Cabot was of opinion that the Federalists ought to meet the issue squarely, explain everywhere that a selfish policy of ambition and revenge had prompted French aid in 1778, and that it was no time for a sentimental and baseless gratitude, when the inter-

ests of property and liberty were threatened. Right or wrong, Mr. Cabot's policy had the merit of frankness; and circumstances ultimately forced its adoption. But, in justice to the apparently violent views of the Federalists, we must try to imagine what our own feelings would have been at the time of the French Revolution, — when its horrors were actually at our doors, and threatening entrance; when the ambassador of that polite nation preached his crusade in our country, appealed to the populace against the government, and spread his pernicious doctrines far and wide. The prospect opened by a general adoption of such theories was one which has been revolting to intelligence in every age; for it involved a temporary return to political and social barbarism. This natural alarm was much increased by the general sense of instability in our young government. Can it be matter for wonder that the Federalists grew more and more savage in their hatred toward the men who made political capital out of Genet and the dangerous doctrines which he promulgated?

Artifices and threats were alike vain when applied to the President; and even now the thought of Genet, baffled and impotent before Washington, whose greatness he professed himself unable to comprehend, causes a feeling of the keenest satisfaction. The President's final refusal to hold any further communications with Genet is connected with an anecdote of Mr. Cabot, related by Mr. J. A. Hamilton in his "Reminiscences." When Washingington resolved upon the important step of dismissing the French minister, he was most anxious to receive the united support of all friends of the administration. To quote Mr. Cabot's own words, as repeated by Mr. Hamilton: —

"John Adams, the Vice-President, was considered a very uncertain man; and the task was committed to me to take care that he should not go wrong on this occasion. I accordingly called upon Mr. Adams in the morning at an early hour, and after a few incidental remarks said: 'Mr. Adams, this French minister's conduct seems to me to be most objectionable.'

"MR. ADAMS. — 'Objectionable? It is audacious, sir!'

"MR. CABOT. — 'I think, if you were President, you would not permit him to perform his office very long!'

"MR. ADAMS. — 'Not an hour, sir! I would dismiss him immediately.'

"MR. CABOT. — 'I wish you would allow me to say to the President that such are your views!'

"MR. ADAMS. — 'Certainly, sir! I will say so to the President myself, when I see him.'"[1]

The embarrassment of the Federalists in dealing with the French difficulties was increased by the conduct of England. That country still smarted from the humiliation inflicted on her by the United States, and allowed her desire for revenge to stand in the way of her best political interests. The true British policy obviously was to conciliate her former colonies by every means in her power. Instead of doing so, — with an exquisite stupidity and an arrogance only less brutal than that displayed a few years later, — England adopted a course which helped greatly to drive America into the arms of the French terrorists, and to increase the difficulties of the administration.

In these unfavorable circumstances, the session of 1793–94 opened. Public interest was very keen, and centred upon the Congress at Philadelphia. In his message, Washington formulated in a few brief words the Federalist policy of a strong neutrality, saying: "There is a rank due to the United States among nations, which will be withheld, if not absolutely lost, by a reputation of weakness. If we desire peace, — one of the most powerful instruments of our rising prosperity, — it must be known that we are at all times ready for war." As long as the United States adhered to this truly national policy, our dignity, neutrality, and self-respect were assured. Its entire abandonment by Jefferson, a few years later, led to the wretched and degraded condition of our country and our politics during the first years of the present century.

[1] Reminiscences of James A. Hamilton, p. 10.

In 1793, the Federalists, though perfectly united in support of the administration, and thoroughly devoted to the leaders who guided them so strongly and so well, were in a most difficult situation. The majority in the House was against them, and for success they had to rely solely upon their superior ability, discipline, and concentration of purpose. In the Senate, their numerical strength had suffered little or no diminution. The opposition's plan of attack was now changed. They dropped the system of personal attack on Hamilton, and made up an issue upon the perfectly false question of supporting the French or British interest. Under the direction of Jefferson, they strove for a commercial policy which should be at once hostile to England and favorable to France; and in this plan they were aided both by popular feeling, and by the ill-advised conduct of Great Britain.

The most important question in the Senate, at the opening of the session, was raised by the petition of Conrad Laub and others against Albert Gallatin's election as senator from Pennsylvania. Mr. Cabot was second on the committee to whom this petition was referred. Their report was adverse, and the subsequent decision of the Senate coincided with the views of the committee. Mr. Cabot's official services were of the same nature as before. He was chairman of the committees on the regulation of coinage, the remission of duties, and the appropriations. He was also chairman of several minor committees on claims and light-houses, and of the highly important ones, to which were assigned financial questions, on the payment of interest, on the assumption of State debts, and on laying duties on wines. As chairman of the committee on appropriations, and of those concerned with the debt, Mr. Cabot appears to have occupied the position of leader in regard to matters of commerce and finance.

With the new year, Jefferson retired from office, but by no means from the control of his party, to which he was now

able to give his undivided attention. In pursuance, however, of the general hostile policy introduced by the restrictive commercial measures of Virginia, the Federalists, to the great disgust of their opponents, brought forward, and carried through, a bill looking to the foundation of a navy. This was another integral part of the Federalist policy, as laid down by Washington, and abandoned by Jefferson.

While these matters were in progress came the news of the British orders in council against neutral ships, and of Lord Dorchester's speech to the Western Indians.[1] Public feeling was inflamed, and the Federalists were the first to take the lead in proposing strong and energetic measures. A restriction of the first order in council produced a temporary lull, of which Washington determined to take advantage by sending an extraordinary mission to England. This scheme originated with Hamilton, who sent for Mr. Cabot to advise with him. Mr. Cabot, convinced of the wisdom of the plan, held a conference with his brother senators, Rufus King, Oliver Ellsworth, and Caleb Strong, all of whom fully approved the mission, and agreed that Hamilton was the most proper person to be appointed. Ellsworth was selected to confer with the President, who, after some hesitation, agreed in the necessity of such a step. Although Washington's own wishes favored the choice of Hamilton as the ambassador, he was deterred from carrying them into execution by considerations of the clamor which would be raised against such an appointment, and which would endanger the success of a decided peace policy. Hamilton himself readily withdrew his claims, holding that personal desires ought to yield to public considerations.[2] The choice, therefore, fell upon Jay, who was duly nominated and confirmed.

[1] This speech suggested the probability of a speedy rupture between the United States and England. See Hildreth, IV. 482.

[2] Hamilton's History of the Republic, V. 532–35 inclusive. Mr. Hamil-

The opposition, enraged at the mission, passed resolutions for a suspension of trade, which were killed in the Senate; the Federalists taking the impregnable ground that warlike preparations, and not interferences with trade, were the true method to ensure peace. I have briefly sketched the state of public affairs at this time, in order to show the views of which Mr. Cabot was a consistent supporter; but we are, fortunately, not left to the letters of friends only for information as to his political opinions and party standing. The celebrated "Anas" afford a glimpse of the manner in which he was regarded by Jefferson. As a friend of Hamilton and a stanch Federalist, Mr. Cabot could hardly expect at the hands of the Democratic chief better treatment than that given him in the following passage: —

"Dec. 1, 1793. Beckley tells me he had the following fact from Lear.[1] Langdon, Cabot, and some others of the Senate, standing in a knot before the fire after the Senate adjourned, and growling together about some measure which they had just lost, 'Ah!' said Cabot, 'things will never go right until you have a President for life and an hereditary Senate.' Langdon told this to Lear, who mentioned it to the President. The President seemed struck with it, and declared he had not supposed there was a man in the United States who could have entertained such an idea."[2]

ton is my only authority for this account of the circumstances connected with the origin of the mission and the selection of Jay. In confirmation of his statement, he refers to minutes of the conference held by Mr. Cabot and the other senators. Where or of what nature those minutes are, I am unable to say; and Mr. Hamilton offers no explanation. As Mr. Hamilton had access to many still unpublished documents, his opportunities of information were unusually good; but the absence of exact references in his work to any manuscript evidence he may have used renders this explanation necessary.

[1] Tobias Lear, Washington's private secretary, afterwards strongly suspected of removing important letters from among Washington's papers, and conveying them to Jefferson. The latter gave him a foreign mission.

[2] Jefferson's Works, IX. 184. To test by the usual standards a story told by a political opponent, embellished many years after, and originally received by that opponent on hearsay and at fourth hand, would be super-

The summer of 1794 was marked by the outbreak of the whiskey rebellion, and the vigorous suppression of that insurrection by Hamilton. This in a large measure, and Wayne's Indian victories in a smaller degree, were the means of greatly strengthening the hands of the government. Hamilton, after encountering many difficulties, by an energetic display of force proved the ability of the new government to sustain itself; and Washington took advantage of the situation to condemn in his message the Jacobin clubs and societies, which had grown up rankly in servile imitation of their French prototypes. The opposition, though rallying bravely in defence of their beloved "societies," lost heart; and the concentration and vigorous attack of the Federalists made them give ground in a fashion which caused intense disgust to Jefferson. An account of Mr. Cabot's services during this session would be but a tedious repetition of those rendered in previous years. Claims, loans, the revenue system, and finance formed as usual his principal duties in the Senate.

At this time, Mr. Cabot made an important change in the circumstances of his private life. He withdrew from all active business, in possession of a reasonable and sufficient fortune, and at the same time left Beverly to make his home in Brookline, where he had purchased an estate. The fashion of retirement to a country place, or farm, was much more common in those days, when the traditions and customs of England still lingered in the community, than now. Mr. Cabot's house in Brookline is still standing, and but little altered. Like most New England dwellings, it stood near the road which led from the village; but the narrow, country lane, winding through the estates of a single possessor, is now replaced by broad streets uniting before the old-fashioned, gabled house, which in

fluous. The anecdote is at least amusing, no small merit in the eyes of any one familiar with the writings of the time; and the last touch about the President displays the genius of a true artist in historical statements.

1795 was secluded and solitary. The farm covered the slopes of a hill, and stretched far away over lands now thickly dotted with modern villas. Mr. Cabot intended to devote himself to the care and management of his new domain, to which he gave the name of "Greenhill." Judge Iredell was a guest there in the summer of 1795; and he speaks in his letters of the beauty of the place, then dressed in all the glories of June.[1]

Mr. Cabot had hardly returned to Brookline, when he was recalled to Philadelphia to attend the executive session held for the ratification of the Jay treaty. The contents of that famous treaty, its ratification by the Senate, and the action of the President absorbed all the political interests of the ensuing summer. The first feeling, when the provisions of the treaty were known, was one of indignation; but sober second thought eventually brought over to its support the great majority of the people, who considered peace cheaply purchased, even at a somewhat heavy price. Mr. Cabot was one of the most uncompromising defenders of the treaty. He took the ground that, defective as it was, we could rationally expect nothing more, in view of our own strength as compared with that of England. If it were admitted that these terms were the best, or nearly the best, possible, the only question then was between them or war; and Mr. Cabot firmly believed that a ruinous war would at that time have destroyed the Union, and produced irreparable disintegration. In his letters to Rufus King and Oliver Wolcott, he fully sets forth his views; and it is not necessary, therefore, to dwell further upon them here.[2]

The great event of the next session of Congress — that of 1795–96 — was the discussion in the House upon the treaty. While this debate lasted, party feeling was at fever-heat. Nothing was possible to the Senate but to await, with what patience they could muster, the issue of the

[1] Life of Iredell, II. 446, 447.
[2] See below, p. 85.

struggle. Jefferson represents that, while the fate of the treaty was in suspense, the Federalists resolved to dissolve the Union, if the House decided adversely to the treaty, and that they announced their intention on the floor of the Senate. Mr. Cabot is mentioned, in the "Anas," as one of the leaders in this movement, and as the person on whom it chiefly devolved to give utterance to this formidable threat.

"March 1. — Mr. Tazewell tells me that, when the appropriations for the British treaty were on the carpet, and very uncertain in the Lower House, there being at that time a number of bills in the hands of committees of the Senate, none reported, and the Senate idle for want of them, he in his place called on the committees to report; and particularly on Mr. King, who was of most of them. King said that it was true the committees kept back their reports, waiting the event of the question about appropriation; that, if that was not carried, they considered legislation as at an end; that they might as well break up, and consider the Union as dissolved. Tazewell expressed his astonishment at these ideas, and called on King to know if he had misapprehended him. King rose again, and repeated the same words. The next day, Cabot took an occasion in debate, and so awkward a one as to show it was a thing agreed to be done, to repeat the same sentiments in stronger terms, and carried further, by declaring a determination on their side to break up and dissolve the government." [1]

Tried by the ordinary historical tests, this story may be rejected, in common with the rest of the "Anas," which are never to be safely relied on, unless corroborated by outside evidence. Yet there is in this an element, or rather a suggestion, of truth more misleading than even absolute inaccuracy. The Federalists believed, and made no secret of their belief, that the rejection of the treaty would bring war, and that war at that period meant a dissolution of the Union. From this undisputed fact, Jefferson concludes a plot, and substantiates his conclusion by a skilful detail of

[1] Jefferson's Works, IX. 190.

circumstantial evidence and minute facts. His accusation of a definite scheme, however, finds no support in the private letters of the Federalists.

Early in this session, it became the duty of the Senate to return thanks, through the President, for a flag presented to the United States by the French Republic. The resolution offered referred to the French as "that magnanimous nation," &c. Mr. Cabot moved to strike out those words; and, after a sharp debate, the motion prevailed. The only addition this year to Mr. Cabot's usual duties on questions of finance, revenue, &c., was his service on the committee on naval armament, — a subject in which he took the deepest interest.

In the latter part of May, 1796, Mr. Cabot returned to Brookline, without waiting for the close of the session, and prepared his resignation, which he shortly after sent to the Legislature. The only hesitation he felt in taking this step was caused by the fear that his successor might not be a man of suitable character. When satisfied on this point,[1] he immediately and with great gladness abandoned public life. The prevailing cause of his early withdrawal was a strong distaste for the asperities of politics, becoming every day more personal and bitter. This aversion to the broils and to the daily wear and tear of public life had made his position an irksome one for some time past; while a life of leisure and quiet, at all times the most congenial to his tastes, by his retirement from business was now open to him.

I have tried in the preceding paragraphs to depict the political position of Mr. Cabot, his rank in his party, and his services to the country. I much regret that secrecy, and, after that was removed, bad reporting, have deprived me of any material for an account of Mr. Cabot's share in the debates. He was not fond of public speaking, and made no

[1] Mr. Cabot's friend, Benjamin Goodhue, of Salem, was chosen his successor.

pretensions to the powers of oratory; and yet he seems to have been a not ineffective debater. Fisher Ames, a good judge, though possibly a partial friend, says: "Madison, in speaking, never relaxes into pleasantry, and discovers little of that warmth of heart which gives efficacy to George Cabot's reasoning, and to Lowell's."[1] The following letters will show, better than any description of mine, Mr. Cabot's opinions and thoughts upon the public affairs, in which he took an active and not unimportant part: —

Cabot to Hamilton.

My dear Sir, — The people of Massachusetts entertain the idea that a balance is due to the State more than sufficient to cover her State debt, and some anxiety has been excited in the Legislature of that State lest she should finally fail of receiving it.

After the failure of the assumption bill, I intended to have had five minutes' conversation with you on the subject, but that your time seemed to be overcharged with other business.

I hope you will find leisure and inclination to furnish me soon with your ideas on the interesting subject of commercial policy, and that you will say definitely whether my continuance in the bank is to be desired or not, since it furnishes so copious a topic for complaint.[2]

I called this morning to bid you farewell, but you were absent.

May God bless you! G. Cabot.

Evening, March 4, 1793.

Cabot to Rufus King.

Beverly, Aug. 2, 1793.

Dear Sir, — This morning's post brought me your favor of the 27th of July. I thought a publication of some of the ideas it

[1] Works of Fisher Ames, II. 42.

[2] Mr. Cabot had been appointed President of the Boston Branch of the United States Bank, when that institution was first organized. This naturally offered a fine opportunity for references to "corrupt Treasury squadrons;" and Mr. Cabot had no liking for the position of target, if it could be

contained, with others which were naturally excited, might be useful, and therefore, after giving them a little change of form and arrangement, have *set them off* for the press. But as they are gone by a subterraneous passage, and under the patronage of another gentleman, it is uncertain whether they will ever appear, or, if they do, in what shape.

The people in this part of the country have but one wish respecting the national peace, — and that is, that it may be preserved, — excepting a few factious men in Boston and a *very few* in other places. They are well united, too, in the sentiment that the President is the proper guardian of the public tranquillity, and that the measures he takes to secure it are fit and proper, and ought to be supported. Our commercial and maritime people feel themselves deeply interested to prevent every *act* that may put our peace at hazard; but who can restrain opinions? The cause of truth requires that they should be free, and will, on the whole, profit by this freedom. Unfortunately, the propagators of falsehood are the most industrious, and for the moment the most successful. Indeed, they are most of them stimulated by the strongest personal motives; while their opponents are actuated chiefly by a love of the public. Who can doubt on which side the victory will be in such a contest? It has been with surprise, as well as concern, that I have seen the rapid progress of Jacobinical principles since my return from Philadelphia. Until Pacificus[1] appeared, there were very few persons whose ideas were tolerably just respecting the relation of the United States to France. Indeed, there are not many now who think correctly upon that subject; but for these erroneous sentiments the friends of the government are as blamable as their adversaries. Why have they not always told the truth, at least so much of it as would have enabled the people to understand that France, in the aid she gave to the United States, was actuated by policy, or, to speak out, by ambition? Why has it been concealed that, from the first moment of her connection with us, she inserted herself into *all* our councils; that by her influence there she procured measures that placed the most precious interests of our

honorably avoided. His application to be released from the bank duties failed, for he continued to act as President of the Boston Branch until after the close of Mr. Adams's administration.

[1] Hamilton wrote under that name at the time when public feeling against England was strongest, and when Genet was most popular.

country at her own mercy; that she obstructed our commercial views; that at the treaty of peace she endeavored to depress us; and, in a word, that she has constantly aimed to keep us low, imbecile, and dependent, &c.? But all this declamation is out of time. Although I have lived much at home, yet I have not been wholly inattentive to what was passing these few months, and, previous to the receipt of your letter, had promoted in some degree the measures you wish. It will be useful to rouse the sober part of the community, and oblige them to attend to a subject, the discussion of which can no longer be avoided.

I am always happy to hear from you, and remain, with sincere esteem,

Your friend, &c., G. CABOT.

CABOT TO PARSONS.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 8, 1794.

DEAR SIR, — A want of leisure has prevented me from making you the return I had promised for your obliging letter. You must, however, indulge me in the hope that my neglect will not discourage you from a repetition of the favor.

I sent you by Mr. Amory Genet's correspondence; but before it reaches you its contents will be less interesting, as you will have previously heard, what is incontestably true, that this fellow has been attempting to raise a large body of troops (to be embodied on the Indian territory) for the purpose of attacking the Spaniards, as he pretends, but possibly to be employed in support of his faction and principles within the United States. These particulars may render his letters comparatively insipid. My respects to Mrs. Parsons.

Your assured friend, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO SAMUEL PHILLIPS.[1]

PHILADELPHIA, 8th March, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR, — Scarcely a day has passed since I last wrote you without a recollection of the subject of your letter, to which

[1] Samuel Phillips, of Andover, Mass., founder of the Phillips Academy in his native town, and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Mr. Phillips was in active political life for many years, but held only provincial and State offices.

no satisfactory reply can be given. But, having already imparted to you the ideas which heretofore have occurred to my mind, I make no scruple of adding now that the prospect of our public affairs becomes daily less favorable. The hazard to which the French faction and its partisans were exposing us has very much diminished in relation to our internal tranquillity; but the measures they promoted, and the spirit they excited in the course of the last summer among our people, must be supposed to have had great effects upon the temper and disposition of the British government towards this country. And, although our government conducted wonderfully well in preserving the neutrality, yet it is quite credible that the hostile sentiments of our citizens to the British nation, propagated with so much zeal and industry and published with so many aggravating circumstances, may have produced a belief in the government of that nation *that our influence in the war, open or covered, would be exerted in favor of France.* To which let it be added, that, in spite of the declared neutrality, the enemies of Britain did equip and arm vessels in our ports, with which, as Mr. Genet says, they captured or destroyed fifty sail of British vessels, and annihilated their trade with the United States. It is therefore at least probable that Great Britain has taken into her account of contingencies a war with the United States. I do not, however, believe that she is willing to make us an open enemy, if she can effect her projects against France and the French colonies without it. But the objects of her pursuit are of such a nature and of such magnitude that she will not hazard the attainment of them from a consideration of our rights, even if she were persuaded we should go to war to vindicate them. I think the language of her conduct is so far intelligible. She plainly says to us, "You shall not hold any intercourse with our enemies which in our judgment may enable them to resist our attacks." In resolving to treat us with such levity, doubtless Great Britain considered our weakness and inability to injure her. She considered, also, that we had already done her some harm, which might justify rigorous measures on her part. But she considered chiefly that our interest and inclination together led us to aid her enemies, and therefore she had nothing very important to fear by incurring our resentment. But with these views I think the minister of Great Britain must have also connected some others not uninteresting. Though *we* are *weak* in arms, and *they* are *strong*, yet they must feel a reluctance at pro-

ducing events which could operate to the derangement of their resources even in a small degree. We are large customers and have running accounts of great extent, and the disturbance of our intercourse must be embarrassing to the merchants and others with whom we deal. A shock to them like fire to a train might run too fast to be stopped and too far to be borne. And an apprehension of this would surely be sufficient to restrain them from all wanton aggression and from all avoidable provocation. On the whole, therefore, among the variety of reasons which I have conjectured as the ground on which our vessels are detained in the West Indies, the most probable is that they think it essential to destroy our intercourse with the French colonies, in order to get the more ready possession of them, and therefore at the commencement of their operations they have determined to arrest all neutral vessels in that predicament. If this be all that is intended, many questions may be suggested as to what is actually done, and which do not seem exactly to correspond with this idea. So far as I am acquainted with the subject, however, all these may be solved on principles of public policy or private interest. We have as yet very little accurate information, and not enough to enable us to judge whether any thing, and, if any thing, what, ought to be done on our part. Enough, however, is known to create great anxiety and to depress the public credit, and it is on this account I state to you the reflections I make. I think the friends of government will be opposed to war and to whatever may have a tendency to produce it; but I think it probable they may propose some provisional arrangements of a defensive kind, and endeavor to obtain by negotiation that redress which could not easily be obtained in any other way. We all perceive that, bad as our condition is, war would make it much worse, and therefore must be avoided. An unarmed nation entering late into a war with those who are well armed, and have been long engaged, suffers out of all measure: this fact has been too well proved to be denied.

MONDAY, March 10.

Since Saturday, when I finished the foregoing sheet, we have been informed of the evacuation of Toulon, which event must of itself have some effect in moderating the insolence of Great Britain. In its consequences, it may perhaps humiliate all the combined nations. I believe it to be for the interest and peace of *our*

country that they should on all sides suffer deeply, and no one triumph. On the one hand, the haughtiness of England, in case of success, would become intolerable to our maritime commerce; and, on the other hand, French principles would destroy us as a society. They are more to be dreaded, in a moral view, than a thousand yellow fevers in a physical. It is on this account, in addition to numberless others, that a war is to be deprecated, as it would by giving us a new common interest attach us more closely, and produce the greatest possible assimilation with them. I pray Heaven, therefore, that this dreaded evil may be averted from us, as one from which the present generation could not possibly be recovered. The post of this day from the eastward brings us some intelligence of vessels being liberated that were seized by the British; and, as this corresponds with my prevailing sentiments that they do not mean to plunder us and to make war, I indulge the hope that their system, when fully developed, will turn out to be less hostile than appearances have indicated or rumor pronounced. Should this prove to be the case, the elasticity of the public mind would soon recover its proper tone, and our affairs would brighten. But, while the Europeans are contending in a spirit of desperation, our tranquillity must be precarious, and it would be presumptuous to disregard the danger. After so long a letter, which you must now be willing to see ended, I wish it were in my power to give you a definitive opinion. But there are not data on which to form it. I therefore have been diffuse in describing the impressions of my mind. Your, &c. GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO PARSONS.[1]

(*Confidential.*)

BROOKLINE, Aug. 12, 1794.

DEAR SIR, — At the close of the late session of Congress, I resolved to free myself from the torments of political anxiety, at least during the present recess. But to attain this desirable respite is no easy thing for any man who sincerely loves his country, who feels any sort of responsibility for its welfare, and who believes that any thing remains to be done to secure or promote it. The public good has always been the victim of private vices. We

[1] When this letter was written, the "whiskey insurrection" was in progress; a circumstance which doubtless invigorated the expression of the writer's sentiments.

witness the ready sacrifice which personal ambition makes of equal rights. We see the facility with which a wicked faction has triumphed over public liberty by assuming popular names. We have seen the expression of the general will of a great society silenced, the legal representatives of the people butchered, and a band of relentless murderers ruling in their stead with rods of iron. Will not this, or something like it, be the wretched fate of our country, if the people can be excited to resist the laws of their own making, and to consider as tyrants those who are appointed to execute them? I know of no security individuals can have for the enjoyment of their equal rights but the force of the laws, there being so many declarations of the general will fairly and constitutionally made. But if this general will is superseded by faction, and its supremacy can be no longer maintained, there is an end of that equality of rights which is the very essence of liberty.

All governments rest on opinion. Free governments, especially, depend on popular opinion for their existence, and on popular approbation for their force. If, therefore, just opinions and right sentiments do not prevail in the community, such systems must necessarily perish. Let me ask if such sentiments do prevail at this moment. On the contrary, are they not hostile or distrustful? and is not this hostility and distrust chiefly produced by the slanders and falsehoods which the *anarchists* incessantly inculcate? I think no honest, well-informed man will answer these questions in the negative.

It is the belief of many able statesmen that no free government, however perfect its form and virtuous its administration. can withstand the continued assaults of unrefuted calumny. This is already verified in some degree in our country, and the fact is so alarming that the real friends of liberty and order can no longer indulge themselves in that repose with which they are lulled by a confidence in the rectitude of their principles. For, while they slumber, the *anarchists* are up and doing. These ideas, common to the minds of those with whom I generally converse, constrain me to solicit your exertion and co-operation with other good men to counteract the mischievous attempts everywhere making to destroy the peace, order, and liberty of our country. Truth alone can be used by men of virtue in this contest. But truth will be a sufficient defence, if extensively propagated. It is well known

that you can give great aid in this honorable work, — by timely explanations in conversations, by occasional paragraphs in the newspaper, by republishing from other papers such pieces as are calculated to inform and rectify the public mind, and finally by stimulating other patriots to join in these efforts. Conscious that I am actuated by those motives only which honest minds approve, no apology is necessary for this application to you on a subject so deeply interesting to all, and in relation to which I have always had the satisfaction to find your opinions and mine essentially agree. With great esteem and respect,

I remain your friend and servant,

GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO KING.

BROOKLINE, 25th July, 1795.

DEAR SIR, — Going into town yesterday for the first time since my return, I met your letter of the 13th, and was greatly rejoiced to find that the insanity which is *epidemic* in this quarter is less prevalent with you. It would be consolatory to believe that among the crew of our political ship the sound would always be sufficient to take care of the sick. But I have not this desirable faith. The readiness and severity with which the treaty has been condemned is a new proof that our government cannot rely for support even upon good men in cases of emergency, for these very generally acquiesced in the censure, without any examination of the subject. It is true that they are now mortified at their indiscretion, and many of them will have the magnanimity to retread their steps; but pride will probably prevent others from acknowledging they were wrong. A number of gentlemen visited me soon after I arrived here, and were easily satisfied that the ideas circulated respecting the treaty were very incorrect; but they all united with me in sentiment, that explanations would be fruitless during the ferment, which was extreme and universal. What was then foreseen has been realized. Men's minds had gone too far; and, when inclined to come back, a little effort has been successful in greatly accelerating the reverberation. With a view to ascertain the state of public opinion and to contribute my mite towards forming it rightly in other parts of the State, I attended the Commencement at Cambridge, and was gratified to perceive that sensible and virtuous men from other quarters resented the proceedings of Boston;

so that, *if I were to judge from the evidence of that day*, I should pronounce that the sober sense of Massachusetts approves the treaty. Since that time, a piece entitled "Candid Remarks on the Treaty" has been republished here from some of your papers, the effects of which are highly beneficial. Such a summary defence was well adapted to the moment, but I hope a more elaborate one will be produced at New York, and handed along very soon. Our mercantile men have learned something more of our rights and the rights of the other nations than they knew formerly, but they have yet to learn that the commerce of the United States is not such as would enable us to dictate the terms on which an intercourse is to be held with the nations of Europe.

Upon examining the East India article, I don't see that our vessels are *prohibited the coasting trade;* and I should imagine they will enjoy it as usual, until an explicit prohibition shall be declared by the British. The more I have examined this article, the better it has appeared; and most men with whom I converse seem to agree that it is good. I have much more to say, but my potatoes need hoeing and must not be neglected; so I only add, with respects to Mrs. King, that

I remain your faithful friend, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO KING.

BROOKLINE, July 27, 1795.

DEAR SIR, — Your favor of the 20th did not come to hand until this moment. It was not wholly unexpected that our mob should inflame yours: all society is full of combustible materials, and a flame once alighted easily produces a general conflagration. It cannot be sufficiently regretted that some of our respectable men have on this occasion joined the Jacobins, and very many of them acquiesced in their measures. They now see the pernicious tendency of their proceedings, and a good portion of them already condemn them. I believe it adds much to their mortification to reflect that they listened to the representations and observations of a man whose want of sense has been thought at Boston a security against his influence. After all, no sufficient apology is offered for the conduct of men who have habitually supported order, and now have arranged themselves with its enemies. Some of them, indeed, say that they were deceived by the accounts brought by

Mr. Langdon;[1] others, by the mutilated abstract published, which totally removed alienage; and many confess that they condemned the treaty without knowing its merits. You will perhaps hold me responsible for these excesses, but I decline being surety against the folly and nonsense of any man. If I had thought as ill of the citizens of Boston as their conduct respecting the treaty would now justify, or if I had realized that Mr. Langdon could furnish sparks to inflame them, it is possible that a few hours' conversation with some of them on the evening of my arrival might have retarded the rapidity of the current, though I don't think it could have changed its course.

In justice to Dr. Eustis,[2] I ought to mention, as from his friends, that one of his motives for sharing in the agency was that of preventing greater mischief. This is laudable, and sometimes expedient; but the services of our friends, when accompanied by improper concessions to our enemies, are too costly to be profitable. You will see a sharp speech of Dexter's,[3] which does him credit for its spirit and good sense; but it is introduced by admitting that the treaty is "not so good as he hoped." I shall desire him to point out some of those good things *which he had a right to hope for*, presuming that his hopes and even desires are regulated by reason.

I wish you would inform me by return of post whether these popular tumults have produced any embarrassment to the President, and whether the treaty, with its accompaniments, is gone? Our good men here all presume that the President is too firm to be shaken, and therefore have the more willingly indulged themselves in supineness. I think, however, they would rally, and make a reputable effort, if it were believed to be indispensable. In Salem and the other seaports, they are pretty steady; and in the country as yet I have not heard of the treaty's being anywhere unpopular, and every day furnishes new evidence that the old friends of order are reuniting even at Boston.

It was observed here that your Jacobins were prudent to en-

[1] I suppose this to refer to John Langdon, afterwards governor of New Hampshire. His desertion of the Federalists rendered him very unpopular with that party.

[2] Dr. William Eustis, afterwards a Democratic Congressman from Massachusetts, Governor of the State, and Secretary of War in Mr. Madison's cabinet.

[3] Samuel Dexter, the distinguished lawyer.

deavor to knock out Hamilton's brains,[1] to reduce him to an equality with themselves; but I trembled at the first account which was related of that adventure, and offered up an unfeigned prayer for his safety, — I mean the silent prayer of an affectionate heart. Mrs. King's order has been transmitted to the manufactory, and in due time she shall hear further. In the interim, believe me truly her and Your faithful friend, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO KING.

BROOKLINE, Aug. 4, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR, — The uncertainty you mention respecting the ratification of the treaty by the President renews my anxiety for the welfare of our country. Although I have entertained some fears that the business was delayed, yet, as no objections from the President had ever come to my knowledge, my hopes greatly preponderated. I shall seize this moment, while the proceeding of the President is unknown, to suggest to the Boston merchants the propriety of a manly declaration of their sentiments; but although I have reason to believe that the treaty is now generally approved by them, yet so many of them indiscreetly censured it, that it is doubtful how far they will incline formally to express their present opinions.

Pride is a powerful enemy in this case, and, combined with the natural reluctance which men feel at combating popular prejudices, may not be easily overcome; but, be this as it may, you may be fully assured that the most respectable part of our community have become the advocates of the treaty, and are extending the opinion of its propriety every moment.

I am told that the only article which is now unsatisfactory to any of the Federalists here is the 10th, which shows, I think, that they are hard pressed by their friends. Indeed, it will not surprise me to find the Senate blamed for not accepting the entire instrument by *some* men who have lately censured every part, such is

[1] A large public meeting, called by the enemies of the treaty, was held in New York, July 18, 1795. The Federalists, to the disgust of the Democrats, appeared there in force. Hamilton rose to address the meeting, and just as he began was struck on the forehead with a stone. "If," said Hamilton, "you use such knock-down arguments as these, I must retire," and thereupon withdrew. The meeting, however, was a failure, and the Federalists were satisfied.

the versatility of opinion. Although we have neither a Curtius nor a Camillus,[1] yet the explanations given by Gore in the newspaper and those circulated by others in private conversation have so well aided the investigations of individuals that the subject is pretty well understood, and its friends increased in a corresponding ratio. I am, however, very glad to see the systematic and able defence setting up in your city, and shall take measures to extend its operation in this quarter. I have too much respect for the character of the President to believe that he can be deterred from his duty by the clamor or menaces of these city mobs, but still I agree with you that their doings should be counteracted by the *good people*, lest it should be imagined that all are alike infected with the rage of disorganization.

Your sincere friend, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO OLIVER WOLCOTT.

BOSTON, Aug. 13, 1795.

DEAR SIR, — The Chamber of Commerce here has held a meeting on the subject of the treaty, and with a remarkable unanimity approved it. They also passed a vote reprobating the attempts everywhere made to excite clamor and discontent. The proceedings are to be transmitted to the President.

At Salem, the respectable people are all acquiescent; and many of them approve, but they think it unadvisable to act. At Newburyport, the principal merchants are also well satisfied; and some steps have been taken to bring them to express their opinions, but I am not yet informed of the success.

On the whole, it may be safely pronounced that the sober and discreet part of even our seaports, and still more of our country towns, feel a great anxiety lest the treaty should by any means miscarry.

[1] "Camillus" was the signature under which Hamilton wrote his famous essays in defence of the Jay treaty. King assisted largely in this work, contributing a number of the "Camillus" papers. The introductory essay of the series was signed "Curtius." Jefferson (Works, IV. 121) supposed it to have proceeded from the pen of Hamilton, but was mistaken in his opinion. (See Hamilton's History of the Republic, VI. 280.) I have little doubt, from the expressions in this letter, that King was the author of "Curtius;" but I have no direct evidence, and an application to Dr. Charles King failed to secure the desired proof of the authorship from the papers of his grandfather.

It is with no less chagrin than astonishment that I learn this day the consummation of the business has been delayed by popular clamor. If delay should terminate in refusal, we are ruined. The present system will have finished its destiny.

Yours faithfully, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO KING.

BROOKLINE, Aug. 14, 1795.

DEAR SIR, — Since my last, I have been at Newburyport, where the merchants are perfectly well united, and have by this time probably made a formal declaration of their opinions. I understand that the only point on which they differed was the expediency of giving to the negotiation personal praise, and this was omitted entirely on the ground of avoiding present irritation.

The Boston Chamber of Commerce have held a meeting. The number attending was, as usual, about forty. They were of the most reputable class, and with only a single dissentient approbated the treaty, and reprobated the attempts everywhere made to excite discontent and tumult among the people. Their proceedings, as well as those of Newburyport, are to be transmitted to the President. At Boston, the members of the Chamber of Commerce who did not attend are to be invited to concur in writing; and it is expected that three-fourths, including nineteen-twentieths of the real respectability, will concur.

At Salem, Mr. Derby, Gray, and some others, having consulted, declare it to be their opinion that seven-eighths of their town would vote to leave the business where the Constitution has placed it; but they think it not best to make any movement, because, they say, as no opposition has been made among them they ought to be considered unanimously favorable.

After all, where is the boasted advantage of a representation system over the turbulent mobocracy of Athens, if the resort to popular meetings is necessary? Faction, and especially the faction of great towns, always the most powerful, will be too strong for our mild and feeble government.

The newspapers will inform you of the arrival of a vessel from Rochelle yesterday, the captain of which informs me that he fell in with the British fleet of fourteen sail of the line, which had combated fourteen French and captured three. The action was

off Belle Isle, and the English captain told our informant that the whole French fleet would have been taken, if night had not covered them. Yours truly, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, Aug. 24, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR, — In answer to your question, it may be said with confidence that New England will be calm and steady, and that the national government will lose nothing *in the present storm*, that depends upon her.

It is, however, a lamentable truth that the first impressions upon good men were so erroneous as to give every encouragement to faction. This delusion was indeed momentary, and, having soon been dissipated by reason and information, has been succeeded by a greater anxiety for the success of the negotiation with Britain than has appeared upon any other occasion since the establishment of the present government. It was in this state of the public mind that the President's letter appeared, and gave universal satisfaction to the true friends of order in all parts of our country. Even faction and anarchy have acknowledged the merit of this letter. It is a remarkable proof of the unstability, or rather versatility, of popular opinion, that some of those men who execrated the twenty senators for advising to a ratification on any terms are already beginning to censure them for having *cavilled* at the twelfth article, and thus put at hazard such important benefits as the treaty would secure to the country. I am satisfied, if the business should not finally be closed, this sentiment will extend very far; and even if all the rest of the treaty should take effect, if no new agreement can be made on the subject of the twelfth article, and France should, as she will whenever able, establish her colony monopoly, we shall be condemned for refusing the partial benefit.

With unfeigned respect and unaffected attachment, I remain

Your faithful friend, GEORGE CABOT.

The next three letters refer to the visit of Lafayette's son, who had fled to the United States for safety and protection. The relations of the United States with France were at that time very delicate, and Lafayette was an out-

cast from his grateful country. Washington hesitated to assist young Lafayette openly, and desired also to sound M. Adet, the French minister, on the matter. At the same time, his deep affection for his old comrade in arms urged him to do every thing for his son. In this dilemma, Washington determined to entrust the care of young Lafayette, then at Boston, under the assumed name of Motier, to Mr. Cabot. He wrote to young Lafayette, explaining his own difficult position and the reasons for his leaving such a matter to another's care; and he also wrote to Mr. Cabot, who replied at once, giving a full account of his interview with Motier, and his tutor, M. Frestel. These two letters have been already published by Mr. Sparks,[1] and explain perfectly Washington's position. For some time after these letters, Washington felt constrained to take no notice of young Lafayette, and to even abstain from writing him. In November, the young Frenchman and his tutor set out for New York. The President at this time, in explanation of his course, wrote to his namesake: —

"I imposed upon Mr. Cabot, a gentleman of character, and one in whose discretion I could place entire confidence, the agreeable office of assuring you, in my name, of my warmest affection and support, and of my determination to stand in the place of a father and friend to you under all circumstances; requesting him, at the same time, to make arrangements with M. Frestel for supplying your immediate wants; and, moreover, that he would add thereto every thing consolatory on my part."[2]

Mr. Cabot relinquished his charge to Hamilton, who, at the request of the President, watched over the young exile until the time arrived when he could with safety enter the President's family. The original embarrassment of Washington in this affair had been greatly aggravated by the fact that the arrival of Lafayette's son was not long a secret. The opposition, not content with offering festivals

[1] Writings of Washington, XI. 64–67.
[2] Ibid., XI. 95.

to young Lafayette, took advantage of the delicacy and restraint entailed by official position to abuse the President. In the words of a stanch Federalist of the day, "It was circulated among these devils that the President took no notice of the lad, because he loved the British and hated the French."[1] The letter to Mr. Cabot admirably illustrates the truth of this ingenious calumny deceased so many years ago.[2]

WASHINGTON TO CABOT.

(*Private and Confidential.*)

PHILADELPHIA, 7th Sept., 1795.

DEAR SIR, — The enclosed letters (which, after reading, be so good as to return to me) will be the best apology I can offer for the liberty I am about to take, and for the trouble, if you comply with my request, it must necessarily give.

To express all the sensibility which has been excited in my breast by the receipt of young Fayette's letter, from the recollection of his father's merits, services, and suffering, from my friendship for him, and from my wishes to become a *friend* and *father* to his son, are unnecessary. Let me in a few words declare that I *will be his friend;* but the manner of becoming so, considering the obnoxious light in which his father is viewed by the French government, and my own situation as the executive of the United States, requires more time to consider in all its relations than I can bestow on it at present; the letters not having been in my hands more than an hour, and I myself on the point of setting out for Virginia to fetch my family back, whom I left there about the first of August.

The mode which, at the first view, strikes me as the most eligible to answer his purposes and save appearances is to administer all the consolation to the young gentleman that he can derive from the most unequivocal assurances of my standing in the place of and becoming to him a *father, friend, protector,* and *supporter.* But secondly, for prudential motives, as they may relate to himself,

[1] Life of Jeremiah Smith, by J. H. Morison, p. 98.

[2] See also Washington's correspondence with Hamilton on the same matter. Works of Hamilton, VI. 51–74; also Writings of Washington, XI. 72, 94, 118.

his mother and friends whom he has left behind, and to my *official* character, it would be best not to make these sentiments public; of course that it would be ineligible that he should come to the seat of the general government, where all the foreign characters (particularly that of his own nation) are residents, until it is seen what opinions will be excited by his arrival; especially, too, as I shall be necessarily absent five or six weeks from it, on business, in several places. Third, considering how important it is to avoid idleness and dissipation, to improve his mind, and to give him all the advantages which education can bestow, my opinion and my advice to him is (if he is qualified for admission) that he should enter as a student at the University in Cambridge, although it should be for a short time *only*. The expense of which, as also of every other means for his support, I will pay, and now do authorize you, my dear sir, to draw upon me accordingly; and, if it is in any degree *necessary* or *desired*, Mr. Frestel, his tutor, should accompany him to the University in that character. Any arrangements which you shall make for the purpose, and any expense thereby incurred for the same, shall be borne by me in like manner.

One thing more, and I will conclude: let me pray you, my dear sir, to impress upon young Fayette's mind, and indeed upon that of his tutor's, that the reasons why I do not urge him to come to me have been frankly related, and that their prudence must appreciate them with caution. My friendship for his father, so far from being diminished, has increased in the ratio of his misfortunes, and my inclination to serve the son will be evidenced by my conduct.

Reasons which readily will occur to *you* and cannot easily be explained to him will account for my not acknowledging the receipt of his or Mr. Frestel's letter.

With sincere esteem and regard, I am, dear sir,

Your obedient and obliged

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

P. S. You will perceive that Lafayette has taken the name of Motier. Whether it is best he should retain it and aim at perfect concealment or not depends upon a better knowledge of circumstances than I am possessed of; and therefore I leave this matter to your own judgment, after a consultation with the parties.

Cabot to Washington.

Brookline, Sept. 16, 1795.

Sir, — The letter which you did me the honor to write on the 7th was received last evening, when I immediately waited on the gentlemen who are the subject of it. They were in a state of anxiety respecting a new place of residence where they might live unnoticed. Considerations of the kind which you have mentioned, and some others, render this eligible for the present; but it is found impracticable here. Already Mr. Motier is known to too many persons; and a public festival announced by the French consul for Monday next, at which all their citizens in this vicinity are expected to attend, occasions serious embarrassment, to which is added that some circumstances of delicacy, relative to the family in which they are placed, make an immediate removal proper.

It was at this moment of solicitude I arrived to testify to them the benignity of your intentions by expressing those unequivocal assurances of friendship which your goodness had dictated, and which were received with every emotion of the most lively sensibility. A conversation succeeded, which had for its object a relief from their present perplexity with the least possible deviation from the path you had proposed. In addition to the motives already explained for removing further than Cambridge, it was urged that the studies now actually pursuing by Mr. Motier are entirely different from those presented in any of our universities, and that your desires will therefore be best accomplished by a continuance in his present course under Mr. Frestel. It was admitted, however, that other aids would be requisite in those branches of education which Mr. Frestel does not possess. With a view to these, and to combine with them abstinence from society, it is thought best to seek a position near some principal town, where all the *desiderata* can be found. No determination was formed; and we parted, to reflect more on the step to be taken, and to examine if there were any situation in this quarter which would correspond with their wishes; but to-day, on their visiting me, I found they had concluded it would be best to go to New York in the Friday's stage, where they expect to be accommodated in a country house, which is in the possession of their friend, Mr. La Callombe, and with whom they may remain in retirement until you shall direct otherwise.

The suddenness of their departure will deprive me of an opportunity of being essentially useful to them, and of executing your commands, which would be the most grateful occupation of my life.

I shall give them letters to Colonel Wadsworth[1] and to Colonel Hamilton, the latter of whom will probably know where they may be found after they shall be established.

I shall speak of Mr. Frestel and a young gentleman whom he accompanies, leaving it with them to make such other disclosures on some occasions as discretion will approve.

Mr. Frestel has a passport from the Committee of Public Safety, and stands fair with his country; and it is doubtful whether Mr. Motier would have any occasion to be private, but for the condition of his friends, he likewise having a passport as a citizen of the United States, under the name of Motier, which is not newly assumed, but is a name which regularly remained to him after the law passed proscribing titles. An unbounded affection cements the tutor and pupil, and renders them inseparable; and it is impossible to see without delight the exquisite gratification of the former at the elevation of character which the latter has already attained.

Mr. Frestel repeatedly mentioned that he has some communications to make, which may affect those whom you love, but which can hardly be explained without an interview. I promised to intimate his idea, but reminded him that you would be absent for several weeks, and added that possibly before your return he might know your pleasure in this respect. If any pecuniary accommodations had been necessary, I should have furnished them; but at present they are supplied. With the highest respect and esteem, I remain, sir,

Your obedient and faithful servant, GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO CHRISTOPHER GORE.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 5, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR, — Your reflections on Randolph's publication[2] have given much pleasure to me, and to several of my friends to whom they have been communicated.

[1] General James Wadsworth, of Connecticut.

[2] An intercepted despatch of Fauchet, the French minister, had indicated that Edmund Randolph, then Secretary of State, was in his pay. Randolph

The questions which suggest themselves so naturally to the mind of the reader, and which you have stated, are of some importance; but it has become doubtful whether any formal answer should be given to a production which has so disappointed public expectation that it engages no attention *either* of party or individuals. *The man* has found *no defenders*, and not enmity enough to sink him lower than he has placed himself.

It may, however, be proper to make it known that Fauchet's letter was kept back by the President from no considerations that were personal, but solely to finish the official papers relative to the ratification in the Secretary's office; after which, a disclosure would have been made to Randolph immediately, but for the indisposition of the Attorney-General,[1] whose assistance was very properly required at a consultation so deeply affecting the public welfare. In vain did the messenger go every day to his house, five miles from town, to solicit his attendance. It was impossible. He grew worse, and finally it was apprehended that he would never recover. As soon as the expectation of seeing him was extinguished, it was decided by the President to make the disclosure to Randolph, which was done without permitting any communication to be made by the officers of government to any person whatever; and it appears at this moment that the first intimation of the business from our government was given by Randolph himself. He probably put the letter immediately into the hands of Dallas[2] and others whose advice he needed. It is true that some whispers were beginning to circulate about this town at the same time,

thereupon resigned, and published a "Vindication," which was a very lame affair. It is said that Washington, on being asked if he had read the book, replied, "Yes, sir, I have read every line, every letter of it; and a damn'der scoundrel God Almighty never permitted to disgrace humanity!" Washington was aroused by the gross misrepresentations of Randolph. It will be remembered that Randolph afterwards proved to be a public defaulter. For the anecdote of Washington, see Hamilton's History of the Republic, VI. 309; for Randolph's pecuniary troubles, Administration of Washington and Adams, I. 280. Although Randolph then labored under an irremovable weight of suspicion, from which nearly a century has not relieved him, the whole business is still involved in mystery. We shall probably never know the exact truth in regard to his dealings with the French minister until the French archives have been thoroughly examined, and Fauchet's private correspondence with his own government brought to light.

[1] William Bradford, of Pennsylvania.

[2] Alexander J. Dallas, of Pennsylvania; afterwards Secretary of the Treasury under Mr. Madison, 1814–16.

which had relation to the subject; but these undoubtedly proceeded from the English, who were not under so strong obligations to be reserved.

The hesitation to ratify which was produced in the President's mind after the departure of the senators from this city arose first from the provision order which it was insinuated was bottomed on the treaty.[1] The "*certain person*" spoken of by Randolph (Hamilton) was on this occasion consulted by the President, and, as I understand, advised to *withhold the exchange of ratifications* in England until the order should be revoked or satisfactorily explained, so that no pretence should be had for saying that we acquiesced in a construction so extraordinary of the treaty. This circumstance, which, if known, would refute so much calumny against Hamilton, happened at an unlucky moment for the President. It unsettled his previous resolution, and laid him open to all the artifices which were then practising by Randolph to deter him from giving the final sanction. You will easily trace the information, which the Jacobins *exclusively* possessed at this period, of the state of the President's mind; and you will see the motives they had for so much exertion in exciting tumultuous meetings, and other seditious practices. A channel was open, through which every sentiment expressed by the President in confidence could be conveyed to the demagogues of the great towns by every post.

A review of these ideas, connected with the transactions of the last summer, will furnish the only clew to the executive proceedings, and will account for the promptitude which seems to have characterized the last act, especially if it be remembered that Hammond[2] was waiting for the President's determination, which had been long promised. The most dangerous as well as most atrocious part of Randolph's design, however, cannot be fully developed without bringing the President into a position in which he

[1] The "provision order" was the order in council authorizing the seizure of all ships conveying provisions which might in any way be used by the French. So extensive a claim was denied by the United States, who held that provisions were contraband only when being conveyed to some port absolutely blockaded or besieged. The British withdrew this claim when the negotiations opened, but Jay was unable to agree to any article on this point. In July, 1795, just after the Senate had ratified the treaty, news came that British cruisers were again enforcing the provision order; and the Democrats promptly asserted that this new infringement of neutral rights was due to the treaty.

[2] The British minister.

never should be placed. The design of separating the President from the Senate, so ruinous if effected, can only be inferred now from the information which Randolph supplies; but the officers of the government, who must possess the most ample evidence, have no doubt of the fact.[1]

I send to Mr. Higginson, by this post, a copy of Hamilton's letter on the power of the commissioners, which, to save me the trouble of transcribing, I must request you to call for, if you wish to read it.

With much esteem and regard, I remain, dear sir,

Your faithful friend, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO WASHINGTON.

MARCH 4, 1796.

SIR, — The great importance of selecting persons speedily for the offices created by the British treaty, and the difficulty of finding those who may be in all respects competent to the duties required, have suggested the belief that it might not be unacceptable to the Executive to receive from various parts of the Union the names of candidates who may be thought most suitable.

Under the impressions of these ideas, I have frequently reviewed the circles in which I have been accustomed to move; and it ought to be confessed that very few have occurred to my mind whose characters were wholly free from objections. However, I do not hesitate to mention Mr. Gore[2] as a gentleman who, in my estimation, unites most of the qualifications requisite for a commissioner in London, and possesses more fitness for that trust than any other person in Massachusetts who can be considered as a candidate.

I also take the liberty of naming Mr. Parsons as a lawyer whose well-known talents peculiarly fit him for investigating and deciding on the claims of British creditors, and Mr. Learned, of Connecticut, as a gentleman whose probity and good sense qualify him for many offices where public confidence is required.

With the highest possible respect, I am, sir,

Your most obedient servant, G. CABOT.

[1] This letter throws a good deal of light on the intrigues by which it was attempted to defeat the treaty. Mr. Cabot was in a position to know accurately the true state of affairs, and his account brings out very forcibly the part played by Randolph. For the views of Washington and Hamilton, see Hamilton's Works, VI. 12, 16, 19, 25, 33, and 35.

[2] Mr. Gore was subsequently appointed, and acted as commissioner under the treaty.

Cabot to Caleb Strong.

Philadelphia, Thursday, April 27, 1796.

My dear Friend, — The question[1] in the House will be taken this day, or at farthest to-morrow; and all agree that the result will be unfavorable. It is hoped, however, that the majority will not be greater than fifty-two to forty-eight.

It is distressing to the few of us who remain here that, at so delicate a conjunction, when the Senate will be called to act a part, it is *totally* uncertain on what side the majority will be found on a question of the most consequential kind. Mr. Vining[2] cannot be heard of, and there is no reason to expect him here in any event; and Mr. Frelinghuysen[3] has this day left us: so that at this moment we should lose the most important questions, if forced to a decision. I have stated these and some further ideas in a letter to Mr. Paine;[4] hoping that he would not persist in his determination to remain at home, when he knows that it is impossible to transact the business depending in our House without his assistance. The President and the friends of order in the Legislature are extremely discouraged by the evident weakness of the Senate at a time when all its members will be needed, and their firmness put to the severest trial. I pray you to come on without a moment's delay, as you would wish to save us from defeat, and our country from disgrace and ruin.

Your faithful friend, G. Cabot.

Cabot to Strong.

Brookline, June 6, 1796.

My dear Friend, — The letters which several successive mails have brought from you give me much pleasure, not only as they contain interesting information, but much more as they testify a sentiment to which my heart is always alive.

My letter of resignation is written, and will be delivered to the Legislature in two or three days; and, as it is understood that *you*

[1] This refers to the execution of the British treaty.

[2] John Vining, senator from Delaware.

[3] Frederick Frelinghuysen, general in the Revolutionary War, and senator from New Jersey.

[4] Elijah Paine, senator from Connecticut.

also intend to relinquish Congressional service, I should have been willing to have had your resignation gone before mine. Indeed, I am so habituated to *follow* or *act with* you that I should have felt more satisfied (if possible) that I was doing right. You were successful in your intention to make Mrs. Cabot and me laugh heartily, by proposing *that I should write you from Congress.* Yes, truly, I will repay your fidelity "*when I am there, and you are at home.*"

Judge Lowell has just mentioned to me that the State of Tennessee is actually admitted into the Union. I charge this to the momentary ill-humor of a disappointed gallant. How mortifying a reflection is it that the most important concerns of a nation should be conducted by such caprice! With what exultation may the ministers of monarchical governments expose the secret movements of our pure republican system, when the public good is *supposed* to be the constant spring of action!

But, although I shall never be able to entertain you with what is passing among the aristocrats of the great world, I have no reluctance at giving you a faithful narrative of what occurs at Greenhill. Here is no faction nor cabal, although our government is perfectly democratic. The swinish multitude are occasionally noisy; but a sop from the cook or a pail from the dairy-woman never fails to quiet them. More humane than those of Paris, they are satisfied with milk instead of blood. Accordingly, we go on harmoniously together; I supplying their table, and they supplying mine. I wish you were here to partake of one out of twenty-five which my breeders have been good enough to produce this spring. If you have really done with Congress, as I fear is the case, why should you not visit Boston, and make my house your lodging? Be assured nothing would give us greater pleasure, provided you do not attempt to rival me too far in the favor of the ladies here.

Your unfeigned and affectionate friend, G. CABOT.

CHAPTER V.

1796–1798.

Retreat from Politics. — Suggested for the French Commission. — Political Services. — Correspondence.

MR. CABOT wished and intended, when he resigned from the Senate, to lead a perfectly retired life and one of uninterrupted quiet. He thought his abandonment of office would free him entirely from the trials of patience and temper so inseparable from political life, but he was not destined to escape so easily. The four years of Mr. Adams's administration were crowded with important questions, and were marked by those bitter dissensions which ultimately destroyed the Federalist party. However much Mr. Cabot might shut out the world, he could not exclude the strong emotions nor repress the deep interest excited in his mind by the course of French policy and by the dangers menacing both his party and his country. He was often applied to for advice during this critical period, was frequently consulted by the party leaders, and was finally called upon in such a way that he was forced to render active assistance. Though he refused office, he could not refuse his friends the aid of his influence and exertions within his own immediate sphere. His correspondence from the time of his resignation to the accession of Jefferson furnishes abundant evidence of much unassuming political activity. True to his first idea of seclusion, he took no part in the canvass which occurred soon after his resignation, and which resulted in the choice of Mr. Adams. His opinions as to the proper course for the

Federalists, in this instance, were clear and distinct. Mr. Cabot believed that the first object was to defeat at all hazards the election of a Democratic, or, to use his own words, a "French President." This point assured, he conceived that the next duty of the party was to unite on Mr. Adams as their first choice. In a letter to Wolcott, he says: "I do not hesitate to avow my opinion that the first and highest duty of the electors was to prevent the election of a French President; and, this being provided for, the next object would have been to secure the election of Mr. Adams. But I will never admit that we ought to take any considerable risk of seeing a French or any foreign President rather than the risk of any one Federal candidate in preference to another."[1] Mr. Cabot's preferences were decidedly in favor of Mr. Adams, in which he differed from Hamilton, whose personal inclinations were all for Pinckney; nor does he seem to have been alarmed in regard to the Vice-Presidency, about which Hamilton was at this time so justly anxious.[2]

[1] See below, p. 119.

[2] I have elsewhere (North American Review for July, 1876) discussed Hamilton's position as to the Federalist candidates, and I have there taken the ground that Hamilton's openly expressed preference for Pinckney never led him into an attempt to bring in that gentleman over Mr. Adams. Hamilton's exertions were directed to having all the electors vote for Adams and Pinckney, because he wished at all hazards to secure both offices. He was perfectly willing to risk the choice of Pinckney to the first place, but to assert that he ever intrigued to bring about such a result seemed to me unwarranted by the authorities. The charge against Hamilton of trying to relegate Mr. Adams to the Vice-Presidency was freely made at the time by Mr. Adams's supporters, and was flatly denied by the other wing of the party. The accusation has been repeated by later writers, but seems wholly unsustained on any reasonable construction of the numerous private letters relating to that time and now before the public. This view is confirmed by the letters in this volume. Mr. Cabot was in a position to know of such an intrigue, had it existed. He was in all the Federalist counsels, was the intimate friend of Hamilton, and yet never alludes to any scheme intended to benefit Pinckney at the expense of Mr. Adams. His silence on such a point is strong proof that the story had no foundation, but what he does say in regard to the election is even more striking and convincing. From Mr. Cabot's description of the probable action of the Massachusetts electoral

While the Presidential election was in progress and during the ensuing winter, public attention became more and more engrossed by our relations with France. Monroe, substituted for Morris as a conciliatory measure, had ingratiated himself with our "magnanimous allies;" if not at the expense of his own self-respect, certainly with great detriment to the dignity of the country he represented. This unwise, if not improper, conduct provoked the censure of Washington, and finally led to Monroe's recall, and to the appointment of General Pinckney in his stead. Mr. Cabot viewed Monroe's course with a steadily increasing aversion, which culminated in the deepest indignation when the news came of the insults offered to Pinckney on his arrival in Paris, and the still more degrading flattery lavished upon the departing Monroe. The subsequent dismissal of our minister with every mark of contempt, and the renewal of extensive depredations on our commerce, rendered war imminent. While affairs were in this unpromising condition, the new President was inaugurated. Mr. Adams, believing fully in the Washingtonian policy of a strong neutrality, desired above every thing to prevent by all honorable means the disaster of a French war, and his attention therefore was at once directed to the scheme of a special embassy. The necessity of such a step Hamilton had foreseen some months before. In a letter dated Jan. 22, 1797, Hamilton pressed this matter on Washington's attention:[1] —

"The best form of the thing, in my view, is a commission including three persons, who may be called commissioners plenipotentiary and extraordinary. Two of the three should be Mr. Madison and Mr. Pinckney; a third may be taken from the northern States, and I know of none better than Mr. Cabot, who, or any *two* of whom, may be empowered to act.

college, it is evident that the only risk anybody there meant to run was that of bringing in Jefferson rather than endanger the choice of Mr. Adams to the first place. All the Massachusetts electors were of course supporters of Mr. Adams. See below, p. 112.

[1] Hamilton's Works, VI. 195.

"Mr. Madison will have the confidence of the French and of the opposition. Mr. Pinckney will have something of the same advantage in an inferior degree. Mr. Cabot, without being able to prevent their doing what is right,[1] will be a salutary check upon too much Gallicism, and his real commercial knowledge will supply their want of it. Besides that, he will enjoy the confidence of all the friends of the administration. His disposition to preserve peace is ardent and unqualified.

"This plan, too, I think, will consist with all reasonable attention to Mr. Pinckney's feelings.

"Or (which, however, I think less eligible) Mr. Madison and Mr. Pinckney only may be joint commissioners, without a third person.

"Mr. Cabot, if appointed without being consulted, will, I think, certainly go."

No action was taken by Washington in this important matter. The approaching end of his term of office, and the short-sighted opposition of Pickering and Wolcott to a peace policy, probably induced him to leave a settlement of this difficult business to his successor. The idea of the commission, however, was ever present to Hamilton's mind, and we find him writing to Sedgwick, Feb. 26, 1797: —

"Were I Mr. Adams then, I believe I should begin my Presidency by naming an extraordinary commission to the French republic; and I think it would consist of three persons, Mr. Madison, Mr. Pinckney, and Mr. Cabot. I should pursue this course for several reasons: because I would have a man as influential with the French as Mr. Madison, yet I would not trust him alone, lest his Gallicism should work amiss; because I would not wound Mr. Pinckney, so recently sent in the same spirit; thirdly, I think Cabot would mix very useful ingredients in the cup."[2]

The morning after the inauguration, Fisher Ames, then about to retire from public life, called upon the new

[1] This I understand to refer to the dangers to be apprehended in a negotiation, from Mr. Cabot's bitter and, as far as it was in his nature, violent hatred of France, the French, and all their works. The excesses of the French Revolution had deeply prejudiced Mr. Cabot against every thing Gallic.

[2] Hamilton's Works, VI. 209.

President, and after speaking of the state of our French relations, of the necessity of a commission, and of sending some man who would command the confidence of the Northern States, recommended the appointment of Mr. Cabot. Ames suggested that Mr. Cabot should be sent as one of the three, if a commission was determined on, or alone, if but one was to go. Mr. Adams, after describing this interview, says: —

"I had thought of Mr. Ames himself, as well as Mr. Cabot, Judge Dana, Mr. Gerry, and many others."[1] "I considered Mr. Ames's candidate, Mr. Cabot, as deliberately as any of the others, and with as favorable and friendly a disposition as any other without exception. But I knew his character and connections were as well known in France, particularly by Talleyrand, as Mr. Gerry's were; and that there were great objections against the former, and none at all against the latter. It would be therefore inexcusable in me to hazard the success of the mission merely to gratify the passions of a party in America, especially as I knew Mr. Gerry, to say the least, to be full as well qualified by his studies, his experience, and every quality, for the service as the other."[2]

While the President hesitated as to the composition of the embassy, Hamilton was urging the necessity of the measure upon all the leading men of his party. On March 22, 1797, he wrote to Pickering: —

. . . "I would appoint a commission extraordinary, to consist of Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Madison, together with Mr. Cabot and Mr. Pinckney. To be useful, it is important that a man agreeable to the French should go. But neither Madison nor Jefferson ought to go alone. The three will give security. It will flatter the French pride. It will engage American confidence, and recommend the people to what shall be eventually necessary."[3]

Again, a few weeks later, he wrote to Wolcott, arguing with great force the wisdom of such a mission as he describes: —

[1] Works of John Adams, Letters to the "Boston Patriot," IX. 283.
[2] Ibid., IX. 287.
[3] Hamilton's Works, VI. 214.

"We ought to do every thing to avoid rupture without unworthy sacrifice, and to keep in view, as a primary object, union at home. No measure can tend more to this than an extraordinary mission. And it is certain, to fulfil these ends proposed, it ought to embrace a character in whom France and the opposition have full credit. What risk can attend sending Madison, if combined, as I propose, with Pinckney and Cabot? or such a man (*two deciding*)? Depend on it, Pinckney is a man of honor, and loves his country. Cabot we both know."[1]

At the same time, Hamilton wrote to William Smith, and in discussing the proposed commission said: —

"And, to produce the desired effect, it seems to me essential that it shall embrace a *distinguished* character, agreeable to France and having the confidence of the adverse party. Hence I think of Madison; but I think of him only as *one*, because I would not trust him alone. I would unite with him Pinckney and some strong man from the North, — Jay, Cabot; and two of the three should rule. We should then be safe."

From these extracts, Hamilton's plan, or rather the principles on which it was based, may be readily understood and appreciated. Sharp, strong, and well-defined, this policy bore all the characteristic marks of the mind which devised it. The central figure in Hamilton's arrangement of the commission was the "*distinguished* character" of the opposition. The subordinate parts were to be filled by two strong Federalists, one from the South, the other from the North; and they were to be the checks and balances on the movements of their colleague. In this way, dignity, force, and consistency would have been imparted to the embassy from the outset, and not only the geographical but the political exigencies would have been duly provided for. There was one man in the United States preeminently fitted to play the part of the "distinguished character" of the opposition, and there was only one.

[1] Administrations of Washington and Adams, I. 490; and Works of Hamilton, VI. 230.

Send any one else in Madison's place, and the difficulties of the situation were enhanced at once a thousand-fold. The two strong Federalists, on the contrary, might have been replaced by a dozen others equally good. Mr. Adams remembered the geographical, but not the political unities. The commission sent was composed of Pinckney, Marshall, and Gerry. Pinckney was common to both arrangements. Marshall and Gerry replaced, in Mr. Adams's commission, Cabot and Madison, as suggested by Hamilton. Mr. Adams apparently labored under the idea that he was merely substituting Gerry for Cabot, both being Northern men; while in reality Marshall took Cabot's place, and Gerry Madison's. This was an all-important difference. To send Marshall instead of Cabot was wise, but to exchange Madison for Gerry was ruinous.

The whole merit of the scheme resided in "the *distinguished* character" of the opposition, by whose presence the country would be united and France appeased, yet whose dangerous tendencies would be controlled by the two supporters of the administration. Madison was such a character, a man of first-rate intellectual powers, of wisdom and address, while Gerry was neither. Partly from the ill-advised opposition [1] of his secretaries, who resisted the appointment of Mad-

[1] See Wolcott to Hamilton, Hamilton's Works, VI. 223. Mr. Adams, in his letters to the "Boston Patriot" (Works, IX. 287), says: "I then called the heads of departments together, and proposed Mr. Gerry. All the five voices unanimously were against him. Such inveterate prejudice shocked me," &c. In deference to the opposition excited, Mr. Adams gave up Madison, who was in every respect just the one man for the place, but, stimulated by the same opposition to Gerry, nominated him at once. Wolcott's scheme of joining J. Q. Adams and Ingersoll (Hamilton's Works, VI. 223) to Pinckney was, of course, absurd on its face. Neither the younger Adams at that time, nor Ingersoll at any time, was of sufficient weight and prominence to be placed on such a mission. Mr. Adams's blunder in saying all "five" opposed him has been admitted in the complete edition of his works. There were at that time but four cabinet officers.

The letters of the secretaries differ most materially from Mr. Adams's account of this interview, and McHenry's especially shows how much later animosities and passions had distorted Mr. Adams's views, and made him

ison only to be saddled with that of Gerry, partly from his own obstinacy, his strange partiality to Gerry, and his notion that he was only putting him in Cabot's place, Mr. Adams blundered into this fatal appointment. Had he but perceived that Madison was the essential part of the commission, all would have gone well. The President yielded to opposition in Madison's case, and disregarded it in that of Gerry. By an opposite course, not only the subsequent troubles with France might have been averted, but the political ruin in which the Federalists were afterwards involved might have been prevented. Mr. Adams took the ground that Gerry justified all his hopes,[1] and brought back the intelligence which ultimately led to peace. No one now would question Gerry's honesty or integrity of purpose; but he was a man of slight intellect, dull perceptions, and no great force of will or character. Such a man was strong enough to quarrel with his associates, but not strong enough to baffle Talleyrand, guide the course of the commission, and bring the negotiation to a successful issue. All this Madison might possibly have done. Gerry, with every appearance of having compromised both himself and his office, merely brought home information such as an industrious and intelligent valet might have gleaned; while the objects of the mission were left a hopeless wreck, and the Federalist party plunged in a desperate quarrel among themselves.

I have dwelt upon this point at some length, because Mr. Cabot's name is so mixed up in the whole affair. He does

believe in the existence of mysterious and deadly hostility, when nothing of the sort existed. McHenry's account of the transaction is at least perfectly natural, and does not require a strong effort of the imagination from the reader. Either McHenry, a perfectly honorable man, has wilfully and knowingly lied, or the "inveterate prejudice against Gerry," and the affection for Cabot on the part of the heads of departments, has been greatly exaggerated by Mr. Adams, induced by the memory of later and more bitter struggles to see plots and intrigues in every incident of his administration.

[1] Works of John Adams, IX. 288.

not himself appear to have known that his name was even suggested by his friends for this important post. He was opposed to the plan of a commission; for, though appreciating the value of peace, and, in the event of war, the necessity of union, he did not believe that any further pacific dealings with France could result in good. In the disputes of which he was to some extent the innocent cause, Mr. Cabot had, therefore, no personal interest whatever; and that Mr. Adams, too, at the time was free from any personal motives, is proved by his offering to Mr. Cabot soon afterwards a seat in his cabinet. Unfortunately, Mr. Adams believed subsequently that his rejection of Mr. Cabot was his "first offence against the sovereign heads of departments." I have been unable to find in Mr. Cabot's correspondence or elsewhere any proof of this assertion. The secretaries were averse to any mission at all, and especially hostile to one which comprised Madison or Gerry. This was the true cause of their opposition at the time to the schemes of both Adams and Hamilton; and they gave a sullen acquiescence to the measures adopted. If the secretaries had felt aggrieved by the non-appointment of Cabot, it would have appeared in their letters. Is it conceivable that the selection of Cabot should have reconciled them to a policy so distasteful that they had opposed Hamilton in regard to it? Though Hamilton's scheme had included Mr. Cabot as an essential part, still Pickering and Wolcott disliked it none the less. The fact was that Mr. Adams entirely misconceived the true state of affairs, and his belief that "the rejection of Mr. Cabot was his first offence against the sovereign heads of departments" is not sustained by the evidence.

In the interval between the arrival of the news of Pinckney's dismissal and the assembling of Congress in special session, it became all important to rouse the people to a sense of the aggressions of France, and to prepare the public mind for strong action on the part of the executive.

Wolcott therefore wrote to Mr. Cabot, setting forth the probable policy of the government, and urging him to use all his influence that a right direction might be given to public opinion. Averse as Mr. Cabot was to political activity of all sorts, this was an occasion on which he could not hold back. To rouse the people against France, to bring home to them, if possible, the infamous conduct of their "magnanimous allies," was a duty from which Mr. Cabot had no wish to shrink. He at once addressed a circular letter to several of the leading New England Federalists, in which he described the attitude of France in the late negotiations, and the probable policy of the administration, and urged the greatest efforts to obtain for the government a hearty and general support. He also sent several articles,[1] conceived in the same spirit, to the papers, and lost no opportunity to declare the sentiments by which, at that crisis, all good men ought to be actuated. Just before the opening of Congress, Mr. Cabot addressed a second letter to a few friends in public positions, giving his views on the situation. He therein expressed his hostility to an embassy, and dwelt upon the importance of prompt war measures. He even went so far as to suggest the possible necessity of an embargo, a policy to which he was always consistently opposed. But, above every thing, he urged the need of a cordial and united support of the executive, to whom he looked for a clear and well-digested plan of action. Even the assurance that Hamilton was anxious for the new embassy could not reconcile Mr. Cabot to the scheme. It was his firm conviction that any more friendly dealings with France would tend only to the revival of the Gallomania and Jacobinism in the United States.

"Quidquid id est, timeo Danaos et dona ferentes;"

Laocoön's famous sentence in its widest extent not unfitly represented Mr. Cabot's feeling then and always in regard to the French.

[1] See pp. 581-600.

On May 13th, Congress met. The firm and manly tone of the President's message delighted Mr. Cabot, and commanded his fullest support and admiration. His one anxiety was now in regard to the action of the House; and, with a view to influencing them, he exerted himself to procure from the Massachusetts Legislature an expression of opinion favorable to the President's views. Although the Federalist policy proved in a slight degree successful in Congress, the extra session was consumed, for the most part, in hopeless wrangling and futile party strife.

The American envoys reached Paris in October, 1797; and a few weeks later Congress again assembled for the regular session. The President urged, in his message, the necessity of still stronger defensive measures, although referring hopefully to the prospects of the French mission. Congress responded but faintly to the vigorous policy of the Executive. Every one was waiting and expectant, for it was universally felt that nothing decisive could be done until the fate of the pending negotiation was settled. The Federalists urged warlike preparations, and the Democrats resisted; but political interests and speculations were centred on the irregular and tardy mails bearing the latest news from Europe.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

(*Private.*)

PHILADELPHIA, June 11, 1796.

DEAR SIR, — The President has determined to make a change in the consulate at Hamburg. Do you know of any respectable American citizen, of a mercantile character, who would be willing to accept the appointment? It has, I take it, been a lucrative place, even by the fees of office; although these could be of little consequence to a merchant of Mr. Parish's[1] great wealth and

[1] Mr. Parish's case was one of the many difficulties which arose during Mr. Monroe's ambassadorship. Parish was an English merchant, who had befriended us during the Revolution. Our consular system, owing to our

extensive dealings. Yet there have been repeated complaints against him for taking exorbitant fees (as seven dollars instead of two for every certificate), which, considering his established reputation and riches, appears unaccountable. Of this, however, an explanation would have been asked, if other causes of a political nature had not influenced the decision. The change will be softened to Mr. Parish, if a worthy American succeeds him; and in this light I have placed the matter in my letter, advising him of the President's determination.

Pray inquire among your friends, and favor me with an answer. . . .

I am very sincerely yours, T. PICKERING.

commerce, was extensive; and in many places it was impossible to have an American citizen in the office of consul. Such was the case at Hamburg; and Mr. Parish, on account of former good offices, eminent position in the mercantile community, and good reputation, was selected as our representative. As was common then and now, he was also agent for another country, and, as it happened, England. Reports reached Monroe that Mr. Parish, "comparatively with England" (Parish's native country), was unfriendly to America; that he was "absolutely unfriendly to France and the French Revolution;" that he was an agent for Great Britain, and that he granted American passports to Englishmen. The three first of these charges were undoubtedly true, and, though objectionable on the score of policy, were not of such a nature as to justify a peremptory dismissal. The last charge as to issuing false passports would, if true, have been a gross violation of morality and of trust. In regard to this, Monroe says, "In justice, however, to this gentleman, I must add that I do not know any instance in which he has betrayed in this respect [passports], and that in others I only apply to him general principles, and bring to your view the complaints of our countrymen." To this recommendation, dated July 6, 1795, for the removal of Parish "on general principles," Colonel Pickering, then acting Secretary of State, replied on November 23d of the same year: "Your suggestions in regard to Mr. Parish, our consul at Hamburg, have led me to remind Mr. Adams of a request formerly made to him, to inquire into his conduct, and report the same to this department. Such I understand to be the fact, and that no report has yet been received." This was a proper and natural answer to what Monroe himself treated merely as a subject to which he desired to call the attention of the government. Before Monroe received this letter, he had received one from a different quarter. On Dec. 5, 1795, or rather on the 13th Frimaire, in the fourth year of the Republic, De la Croix wrote to Monroe, requesting the recall of Parish, as an agent of England and a granter of false passports. When Pickering's letter came therefore, Monroe was prepared to describe it "as advising him that this British subject should not be compelled to yield his post to an American citizen, at my request, supported as it was by such weighty reasons." This

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, July 8, 1796.

DEAR SIR, — I have inquired diligently for a character to supply the vacancy at Hamburg, and all my friends unite in the belief that Mr. Samuel Williams,[1] of Salem, is a very suitable man. His reputation for integrity and good sense is thoroughly established; and I fully believe his appointment would be thought a wise one by all who know him. He has been for some time past in France, and is now in England, where his brother Timothy supposes he would reside a year or two; * but, although it cannot be ascertained here yet, yet he thinks it in the highest degree probable that he would readily accept the trust.

Yours sincerely and faithfully, G. CABOT.

* [That is, if not called by any appointment or other occasion to quit England. — T. P.]

ingenious misrepresentation may be passed over in favor of one which immediately succeeds it. Monroe says, "For although the administration (not being able to resist the objections to his continuance) did remove him, yet it was done in a manner so as to show the French government it was not done in compliance with its request." This statement Monroe bases on a letter of Pickering's (dated June 2, 1796) to the French minister, in answer to one complaining of Parish. In this letter, Pickering says that, in consequence of Monroe's complaints, inquiries had been instituted in regard to Parish, but were not yet concluded. He then says that Parish had an undoubted right to act as agent for England, and characterizes the issuing of false passports as a crime of the deepest dye. But Pickering adds, there is no proof of this last charge, and then continues: "Desirous, however, of maintaining a course of action as impartial as his principles, the President has for some time contemplated a change in the consulate at Hamburg, and proposes to supply the place of a foreigner by an American citizen." The letter to Mr. Cabot ten days later was the result of this determination. From this letter, and the passage just quoted from Pickering's official note, it is evident that Parish was removed solely and openly on general grounds of policy and from principles of strict neutrality, while Monroe represents the government as concealing their motives. The confutation of this specimen charge may be drawn entirely from the documents cited by Monroe himself. (View of Conduct of Executive, pp. xlvii, 195, 302, 319, and 368.) It is of importance, as bearing on the general character of Monroe and his French mission.

[1] Mr. Williams was subsequently appointed, and accepted the office. At a later day, Mr. Williams was the largest American banker in London. He was a nephew of Colonel Pickering.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, Aug. 31, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR, — I feel much indebted to you for your favor of the 22d, and am rejoiced at the information it contains. Government cannot long be respected, if it should submit tamely to the abuse of its own servants; and this sentiment is so natural that a general indignation is felt at the supposed baseness of our minister.[1] His disgrace is surely merited, and his recall is highly approved by all those whose opinions I have heard. There are, indeed, some who think the measure has been too long delayed, because they fully believe that the French executive has been *invited to bully us* for daring to be so independent as to be just to ourselves. It is unfortunate for our country that a fact of this kind, however true, is not very susceptible of proof, since a mere negative conduct in the minister may be perfectly understood, and therefore none but the greatest of all blockheads would be likely to go farther; and yet it has been frequently said, by Americans coming from France, that the execrations of our government were confined chiefly to that circle of society of which Mr. Monroe was the centre. Whatever may be the final destiny of our national system, it cannot be doubted that those who are entrusted with the administration will have the concurrence of every honest citizen in displacing faithless officers and disgracing treacherous ones. The examples which have already occurred I am persuaded have increased the respect of the people, and have discouraged the efforts of faction. It is asked what becomes of Skipwith,[2] the tool of Monroe. I have answered that I know nothing of the disposition of the executive towards him, but that it may be relied upon, or he would be no longer suffered to hold a public trust after he shall have been proved unworthy of it by reasonable testimony, but that those who complain of him ought not to imagine that the executive can know his conduct without being informed, or that it will act with-

[1] Monroe.

[2] Fulwar Skipwith was Monroe's secretary. On the death of Barclay, our consul at Paris, Monroe appointed Skipwith to fill the office temporarily. Skipwith was as ardent a Franco-maniac as Monroe, and the latter's confidential adviser. See Monroe's Conduct of the Executive, pp. viii, 39, 50, 57, 87, 94, &c.

out a competent knowledge. I pray you to make my regards acceptable to Mrs. Pickering, and be assured that I am

Your faithful friend, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, Oct. 11, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR, — . . . The President's advice[1] is an excellent coronation of an excellent public life. I think it will do as much as any thing can toward saving us from the miserable servitude to which our folly and vices seem to destine us.

Mr. J. B. Cutting[2] tells me that the French successes in Italy will certainly secure the election of Mr. Jefferson. France, he says, must be appeased by our making a president she likes. If the report be true that she has a powerful fleet at Halifax, I imagine Mr. Cutting's opinion will be adopted by many who have always considered (and some of them desired) that our national *independence* should *depend* on France. . . .

Yours truly, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, Nov. 30, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR, — I am glad to see Mr. Adet's manifesto,[3] which you were so good as to send me. If the devil is in company, it is always best to see his cloven foot. Although I am not sure that our country can escape all the evils which threaten it from without, yet I am persuaded that our chance will be best when we no longer indulge ourselves in the foolish belief of French friendship. The copy you sent me was the only one I heard of by the post, and consequently I cannot state to you the opinions of others; but my own is clear, that this measure will serve to strengthen our government.

[1] This refers to Washington's Farewell Address.

[2] Dr. J. B. Cutting had been abroad in a semi-official capacity, and appears to have been a busy though unimportant politician. His brother, Nathaniel Cutting, seems to have indulged in the same pursuits. See Gibbs, Administrations of Washington and Adams, I. 492; and below, pp. 121, 122.

[3] Adet, just before leaving the country, published a species of proclamation in Bache's "Aurora," in which he called upon all Frenchmen resident in America to wear the tri-colored cockade, "the symbol of a liberty the fruit of eight years' toils and five years' victories." Most of the Democrats,

No decisive judgment can be yet formed respecting the votes of our electors for a second man. They will, doubtless, give Mr. Adams every vote, and I think a large majority (perhaps all) to Mr. Pinckney. Upon this last point, they will probably be governed by the best intelligence which can be had on the day of voting. If they could certainly make Mr. A. President and Mr. P. Vice-president, this would be done; or, if it should be pretty evident that Mr. A. can *not* be carried, and that Mr. P. *may*, I should not doubt they would give Mr. P. every vote. At any rate, you may rely that proper attention is paid to the business.

Yours sincerely, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, Feb. 2, 1797.

DEAR SIR, — I can hardly thank you sufficiently for the excellent treat you have sent me under a cover dated 24th ultimo.[1] I had just dined at Mr. Higginson's when the packet was brought me; but although it was a snow-storm, and I was obliged to come home, we nevertheless read over the document before we parted. You would certainly have been gratified, could you have witnessed the strong emotions of approbation which were continually excited; and you would have laughed, in concert with us, at *many of our recognitions of the old* "Lover of Truth."[2] I have perused the piece to-day with as much attention as the time would allow, and I am fully satisfied it must do infinite service to our country. If, however, it should provoke some snarling and barking among the

unable to resist this touching appeal, joined their French brethren in mounting the cockade, — a fashion which was afterward generally adopted as a badge of party. The Federalists called Adet's address the "Cockade Proclamation." Soon after this, Adet sent notes to the State Department and to the "Aurora," which he seems to have regarded as co-ordinate branches of the government. The proclamation was surpassed by the eloquence of the note. The latter is, unfortunately, too long for insertion; but it avowed that the name of America still excited "sweet emotions" in the French heart. This was consoling, but hardly justified a change of the national policy. Mr. Cabot's reference here is to the note.

[1] The "excellent treat" was Colonel Pickering's despatch of Jan. 16, 1797, to Pinckney. In this able paper, Colonel Pickering replied to Adet's charges, and made a clear presentation to the general public of our relation with France.

[2] Signature used by Colonel Pickering in his first writings in the Salem newspaper, at the outbreak of the Revolution.

factious curs, I shall not wonder; but I trust you will not be disturbed by their noise. I pray you to accept my unfeigned respect and regard, and believe me ever

Your sincere and obliged friend, GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO SAMUEL SEWALL.[1]

BROOKLINE, Sunday, Feb. 5, 1797.

DEAR SIR, — It would afford me great pleasure, on personal as well as public considerations, to repay you the aid once given me on the subject of the fisheries, when *you* were a *master*, and *I* a *servant*.

I have long been sensible that the allowances for salt considerably exceeded the quantity consumed, and possibly still more exceeded the quantity on which a duty had been paid. I think you will find the public books exhibit a view of the accounts previous to 1795 much more unfavorable than the one presented by that year. Being aware of this, I had expected an attack upon the fishery system, and had cast about for the means to repel it; and I had satisfied myself that a good answer might be given to those who should charge us with unfairness in the data and calculation on which the allowance law was founded. It was the intention of that law to give to the fishery as much in the form of a *tonnage allowance* as the public would *probably* have given on the exportation of fish, if the drawback[2] had continued, *including the charges borne by the public in ascertaining the quantity of fish exported.* To determine what this would be, I offered a statement, showing the number and tonnage of the vessels in several principal places, with the actual quantities of fish taken in those places; and I offered another, showing the whole quantity of fish exported; and, by apportioning this to the tonnage employed in taking it, I proved how much the public would pay per ton.[3] These statements are lost, and cannot easily be recovered; and it would be difficult to avail ourselves of the benefit of their results without a complete recollection of all the component parts. I remember that the calculation of a season's produce was in some cases made from the

[1] At this time member of Congress, and afterwards judge of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts for many years; chief justice from 1813–14, the year of his death.

[2] On the salt duties.

[3] See above, pp. 38, 41.

known produce of a part of one season only, the public record at that time not furnishing more perfect materials. In addition to the information derived from the public offices, I procured from individuals, in various places, estimates of the quantities of salt consumed on a hundred quintals of fish in each of the different fares, and also the quantity of fish taken in each fare by each vessel, *on an average.* From all these estimates, formed by different persons in different places, I made a general estimate, as perfect as I was able to make, having due regard to the particular branches of the business, and other local interruptions which must have affected the individuals in their estimates. The allowance by law on the tonnage shows how much salt each vessel must have been supposed to consume; and although the allowance at the time was not narrow, yet I am convinced it could not have exceeded the actual consumption to any considerable amount; and yet, perhaps, it may now appear by the public books that the allowances were extravagant, and the calculations grossly erroneous. Several circumstances, not foreseen at the time of the passing of the law, have occurred which have produced these appearances. At the time the law passed, and for a considerable period before, salt was cheap, having been sold as low as six shillings eight pence the hogshead by the cargo for fresh salt, and from that upward to ten and twelve shillings for St. Martin's. The price of fish at the same time was ten to fifteen shillings; thus a quintal of fish was worth more than a hogshead of salt. It cannot be doubted that under such circumstances salt would be used more freely than when it was dearer. I think seven hogsheads of salt for a hundred quintals of Isle of —— fish, ten hogsheads for Bank fish, and twenty-two hogsheads for Bay fish, were estimated as the ordinary consumption, the two latter being a little increased in the summer fares. Supposing a vessel to take nine hundred quintals in a season, one hundred and fifty were assigned to the spring fare, two hundred and fifty to the fall, and five hundred to the summer fare. The summer fish required more salt, and would sell for the least money. Since the law has been in operation, salt has risen to these prices: that is, twenty shillings for the lowest quality; and the best has been as high as thirty-six shillings, while fish has not doubled. Supposing the law to have been accurately just in the relations which prices bore to each other when it passed, yet these have so changed since that it may have become otherwise. It is

easy to perceive that the vessels might with profit carry on those parts of the fishery where the least salt was consumed, and the fish most valuable per quintal, as the spring and fall fares, particularly the former; while the summer fares, and especially those to the Bay of St. Lawrence, could not be made, on account of the great consumption of salt and the low value of that kind of fish. Indeed, the summer fare always consumed the principal part of the salt, not less than fifteen hogsheads per one hundred quintals having been used *sometimes* in the Bay. This single circumstance might account for the fact, if it is a fact, that the allowance to the fishery greatly exceeds the salt consumed. There are other causes which co-operate, — such as instances of vessels fishing only four months instead of the whole season, they being attracted by exorbitant profits to foreign trade. I think it important, however, to suggest that at the commencement of the operation of the fishery law there was on hand an *immense supply of salt.* All the stores were full, and it might have been bought the year before lower than at any time since our Revolution by fifty per cent. Until all this extraordinary surplus, which was *hoarded* up for great profits in consequence of duties laying and expected, no proof could be drawn from the public books of more being allowed to the fishery than was consumed in it. That there were fresh *hoards* is a well-known fact, and may be well credited from the prices, which could only have been depressed so extremely as they were by the superabundance of the article in the market, and this in all the Eastern States. My own stores were filled, and I was solicited in 1790 or 1791 to buy at Portsmouth and Newburyport at eight shillings, deliverable in Beverly or Boston; and I know of no better evidence of a universally surcharged market. I like your salt-tax, and am in favor of a direct tax also, sufficient to make up all deficiencies. But I am in the midst of company, and cannot add to my letter by this post. To-morrow I will look into my chaos of papers; and, if any memoranda can be found that may be of use, I will forward them by the succeeding post.

Yours sincerely, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO SEWALL.

BROOKLINE, Feb. 6, 1797.

DEAR SIR, — I have looked over those of my papers that can be of much use to you. Some of the notes which I had made to

support the debate in the Senate are enclosed. They are not altogether intelligible, and in some particulars were applicable only to that debate. The general estimates of which I spoke in my letter of yesterday were put into the hands of different members, and probably were never returned, as I find no copy. I admitted the supporting of one branch of industry permanently by bounties which must be paid by a tax on others was, in general, absurd; but it might be the duty of government to do it in *several cases*. It might do it very properly in a case where the business would be permanently profitable to the country after it was fully established; *but where the establishment was obstructed by extraordinary and artificial means, practised by rival nations*, which it might be hoped would be relaxed or relinquished after a little while, &c., it must be in some degree the duty of government to afford public aid, if, as in this case, a great multitude of the citizens with a large capital were so engaged as to be *dependent* on its continuance. Mr. Jefferson, in his report, says: "Fisheries with distant nations would come to nothing, if not supported from their treasuries. The advantages of ours place them on higher ground, such as to relieve the Treasury from giving support, *but not to permit it to draw support from them*."[1] Although I argued that the fishery, as a source of pecuniary advantage, might be entitled to some pecuniary aid, yet I confessed it *needed* only to have a full remittance of the revenue drawn from it; and this was the principle of the bill, and upon this its defence chiefly rested. But I maintained strenuously that, if more assistance were necessary to keep up the fisheries, there were reasons of policy which ought to reconcile every man in the United States to the measure. I stated the capture of more than two thousand British vessels by the privateers of New England in our war, and the actual arrival of more than twelve hundred in safe ports. This important fact had great weight with those gentlemen who realized it. I think the whole navigation of Great Britain is stated to have been less than seven thousand vessels in the year 1775, and the New Englanders alone captured nearly one-third of that number before the peace of 1782. Six or seven hundred of them were recaptured by the British.

Yours truly, G. CABOT.

[1] See Jefferson's Works, VII. 554, 555.

WOLCOTT TO CABOT.

PHILADELPHIA, March 27, 1797.

DEAR SIR, — It is now certain that General Pinckney has been refused a reception by the Directory, and that the refusal has been attended with extraordinary circumstances of indignity. In addition to the facts detailed in a letter from Paris dated the 7th of January, which are correctly stated, there is one which you ought to know. Mr. La Croix, in a *letter* to Mr. *Monroe*, announced it to be the *determination of the Directory not to receive another minister plenipotentiary from the United States until the grievances of France shall have been redressed.* The grievances of which a redress is to be a preliminary to the reception of a minister are supposed to be those stated by Adet, and to which the government have given an answer by which they must and will abide. The violation of the British treaty, the repeal of laws, and the claim of consular jurisdiction paramount to the courts of our country, are points never to be conceded.

It is also proper that you should know that Mr. Pinckney was *specially* instructed, prior to his departure, on *every subject* of complaint which *then* and *now* exists, and that his letter of credence stated that the President, "sincerely desirous to maintain that good understanding which from the commencement of their alliance has subsisted between the two nations, and to efface unfavorable impressions, banish suspicions, and restore that cordiality which was at once evidence and pledge of a friendly union, had judged it expedient to appoint," &c. In point of rank, General Pinckney was invested with a character *equal* to that enjoyed by Mr. Jay, and was moreover designated, as has been shown, as the *messenger of conciliation.* I have stated these facts, because the Jacobins will endeavor to prevent any defensive measures until an *envoy extraordinary* can be sent, and the issue of his mission known. Our friends, having been the advocates of negotiation on a former occasion, may be deceived by the specious appearance of a parallel case.

The truth is, General Pinckney is in *fact* an *envoy extraordinary*, *special objects* being designated in his letters of credence; and in *name* he is a minister of equal rank. So far as respects the *substance* or any point of *etiquette*, France ought therefore to be satisfied. Mr. Pinckney is rejected, because the Directory mean to

plunder us; and they will suffer no discussions, to avoid hearing and being disgraced with the manner in which they know we shall utter our complaints.

It is contrary to the system of France that we should remain neutral. No nation will be permitted to be neutral: we must join France, or defend ourselves against France. The Directory expect that the people will not support the government: if they separate on this occasion, our country is undone.

In my opinion, we must prepare for a serious state of things, one which will continue for a *considerable time*, and to meet which firmness, decision, and system are *indispensable*. We must *arm* for the *defence* of our commerce when attacked; we must fortify some or all our ports; we must equip ships-of-war to serve as *convoys*; we must lay a tax; and we must keep a minister as near the Directory as he shall be suffered, to improve any opportunity for discussion and amicable adjustment, but never to disgrace our government by retracting any thing which has been done.

The plan, on the other hand, will be to do nothing, until the issue of an extraordinary mission can be known. In the mean time, our commerce will be ruined, our public credit blasted, despondency, distress, and faction will impair and divide our country, and finally the French faction will obtain an ascendency.

I do not write this from any knowledge that the measures I mentioned will be adopted by the President. But this I am certain, — these measures or something better will be recommended by him. He will do what is right. In the mean time, the country ought to be roused, not inflamed. They ought to make up their minds for a serious and persevering exertion. They must consent to sacrifices; and they must cling to their government, and reject the distinction attempted to be established by the Directory, or they are lost. On the contrary, if they do what is right, I will pledge my head that they will be successful. I rely upon you to be an *apostle* of truth in Massachusetts.

Yours truly, OLIVER WOLCOTT, JR.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, April 3, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR, — Your favor of the 16th ultimo and its accompaniment were received yesterday. Whether the government will

have virtue enough to profit by your labors or not, time alone can show; but we, the people, are certainly much the wiser, and as one of them I thank you for the instruction.

I foresaw at an early period that, if the Federalists were faithful to the country, their conduct would be liable to misinterpretation; and, considering the sort of stuff men are made of, I confess my apprehensions have been very great that some of the best characters in the nation would be looked upon with jealousy. Although I took no part in the election, I do not hesitate to avow my opinion that the first and highest duty of the electors was to prevent the election of a French President; and, this being provided for, the next object would have been to secure the election of Mr. Adams. But I will never admit that we ought to take any considerable risk of seeing a French or any foreign President rather than the risk of any one Federal candidate in preference to another. But our misfortune is that, when we profess to set the interest of the public above that of our friends, *their* pride forbids them to believe, or egotism to forgive it.

I have not the privilege of a Democrat, and therefore cannot answer your questions for the people. But for myself I can readily say that the United States are manifestly in the right, and therefore cannot confess they are in the wrong. Of consequence, they can neither repeal the acts of their legislature, nor reverse the just judgments of their courts, nor violate their engagements to another nation. But you would know what the people will think. I presume, if the government assumes the tone it ought, that the people will accord with them; and, if the government does not, I should expect the people will blame them hereafter, when they shall have experienced, in addition to their losses of property, the more irreparable loss of honor. Such is my course of thinking, when, abstracted from the world, I revolve the subject in my mind; but I ought to add that, whenever I go out of my own house or have guests within it, I am led to distrust my reasonings and conclusions.

I find myself lost in the errors of the French Revolutionists, who maintain that the people always understand their true interests and will always vindicate them. How this may be in the political millennium I know not; but, in the present state of society, folly and the vices which are its natural offspring have a power which cannot be overcome.

After all, we must take the world as it is, and by expecting less expose ourselves to less chagrin. I have long seen that your sensibility was deeply wounded by the want of interest in the affairs of the nation which is discovered in many *public* men; but I hope you will not always be a prey to that sort of anxiety; and, if you cannot arrive at a pure apathy, I hope you will at least moderate your sufferings, for I am sure the consciousness of what you have done ought to satisfy pride as well as principle, and, if there is to be public disgrace, no part of it will attach to you.

Yours faithfully, G. C.

Cabot to Wolcott.

Brookline, April 7, 1797.

My dear Sir, — It gives me infinite pleasure to learn from you that our Palinurus is undaunted at the storm which is gathering. Popular gales sometimes blow hard, but they don't blow long; and the man who has the courage to face them will at least *out*-face them. I hope from my soul that the President will enjoy that immortality which is due to the man who dares do right when all the world does wrong. I believe, however, if he is sternly and strongly right, a great many people will discover that they themselves are so. I readily accept the apostleship you mention, and shall use your discourse *as if it were my own*. Your letter arrived yesterday afternoon, and already my zeal has produced a letter of two sheets, which will be transcribed as a circular to half a dozen friends. I shall quote no authorities to infidels, and as for the faithful they won't need them.

I am as ever your affectionate and faithful

G. Cabot.

Cabot to Wolcott.

Brookline, April 13, 1797.

My dear Sir, — It has been my intention to communicate to you two occurrences of last summer, which seemed to be of consequence to be known to those whose opinions must guide our affairs. The first is the substance of a conversation * with the Duke de Liancourt,[1]

* *I think this conversation was in the month of August.* — G. C.

[1] Frederic Alexandre François Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, an *emigré* of 1792, after which time he travelled in the United States. He returned to Paris in 1799, and published an account of his travels in eight volumes.

in which he disclosed to me the determination of the French Directory to order the seizure of all vessels that should be found to have on board *any article* of the product or manufacture of *any of the British dominions*, and all such products and manufactures to be condemned, *wheresoever from, whithersoever bound*, and *to whomsoever belonging*. Whether the *vessel* was to be condemned or not, he did not clearly express. He assured me of the authenticity of his information, and that the system would be carried into operation "*as soon as the Emperor should be broken down*," which he said would be in September or October. After a moment's pause, I observed that I did not at all doubt the truth of his information, and that my mind was ready to receive much more. He perceived that my gravity and moderation were affected, and suddenly added, "What! you think this would be unjust?" "I think," said I, "it would be very impolitic, because it would confirm all those charges of tyranny, injustice, and contempt for the rights of others, &c., &c., which are made against France by the wise and virtuous part of mankind. It would be, in fact, a greater outrage upon neutral nations than was ever committed." "Why," said he, "it may be disagreeable; but there is no other way of destroying England." I acknowledged to him, in a spirit of irony, that if the English could be destroyed in no other way, that would justify it; but I added that my own opinion was that such a measure would unite the English to a man, and excite the most desperate spirit in the nation; that they would cover the sea with their ships, and by the greatness of their exertion would annihilate the remaining navy of their enemies, and would block up for nine months in the year every port of France on the Atlantic. He smiled at my opinions, and said the power of England was at an end. Her resources were exhausted, and she could not add a single ship, nor find the means of supporting her present navy another season. I rejoined that all the civilized world would have cause to mourn, if this should be true; for they would then be obliged to fight against France, or give up their independence.

The other occurrence was an unexpected visit from Cutting,[1] who asked me, without much ceremony, "whom we intended to make President." I told him I had nothing to do with it, but the friends of the government would certainly make Mr. Adams, if they could, or, if they could not elect him without a hazard of Jefferson's coming in, they would perhaps make Mr. Pinckney;

[1] See above, p. 111. For some account of Dr. Cutting, see "Recollections of Samuel Breck," pp. 173. 185.

for they deemed it essential to the safety of the country to exclude Mr. Jefferson, and, if possible, to choose Mr. Adams. He *affected* great surprise at these sentiments, and assured me that, if I went into the world instead of remaining in solitude, I should find a total change of sentiments among the Federalists, which had recently taken place; that, whatever they might think of the tendency of the French Revolution to serve or to injure the cause of freedom, they were all united in their estimate of the French power and of the use that would be made of it; and that they saw plainly "*we must soothe France by making their favorite Jefferson President, or we must take a war with them.*" "This language," said I to Mr. Cutting, "is what I should have expected from you and your party; but, if the alternative is made, I trust there is virtue in the country to make a war against tyrants rather than tamely submit to them as masters." He said he was sorry I thought him a party man, &c., &c., and then asked me if I had seen the paper of the day. I told him no. "Oh," said he, "the contest is nearly over. Buonaparte has cut up all the Austrians, and there will be no further opposition in Italy." He then, repeating his regret at my tenacity, assured me that Colonel Hamilton had declared to him that Mr. Jefferson must be supported, as the only way of appeasing France. I told him Colonel Hamilton's opinion would have weight with me on every such subject, but he was frequently misrepresented for party purposes, and nothing short of hearing it from his own mouth would make me believe he was willing to see Mr. Jefferson President. All this respecting Hamilton I am persuaded is false, but the extreme desire discovered by Mr. Cutting to draw from me a sentiment of acquiescence in Mr. Jefferson's election for the sake of pacifying France is unaccountable. I give you the essence of what passed, leaving out many little circumstances which would be tedious to recite. It was my expectation to pass a night with Mr. Adams in November, when I should have related every thing to him; but my indolence conquers every thing, and I stayed at home, where I have radicated too strongly to be easily removed.

I shall write you again in a few days, when I may possibly send you a copy of a letter which I have addressed to a few friends confidentially, assuring them that the government would be firm, and showing the necessity of our exciting the people to support the measures which shall be adopted.

Your faithful friend, GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

APRIL, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR, — As I hold myself accountable to those by whom *I am sent*, I enclose you a copy of one of my epistles, that it may be seen whether the doctrines I teach are sound or not. I also enclose you an answer from one of the gentlemen to whom my *circular* had been sent, that you may see how men are affected by a little display of political truth. Mr. Watson writes with a running pen, and therefore may express a little more than he would, if required to be precise; but, in support of his opinion, I may add that Mr. William Gray, Jr.,[1] who is one of our most sensible men and the greatest merchant in this State, assures me that he finds men in every place and situation united in the conviction of the perfidy and wickedness of France towards us, and he has no doubt the people will zealously support every efficient measure which the government shall adopt for our protection and defence. I desired my son to transmit you a copy of my letter to Jeremiah Smith, that you might more perfectly know the ideas I have propagated; and for the same purpose I wish you to read a piece I sent to the printer this morning for the next "Centinel," addressed to the "Lovers of our Country," and signed "Fortiter in Re."[2]

Several gentlemen who live in the interior of our State, to whom I have written, have made me no reply; but I am satisfied that public opinion is in a right course and makes a daily progress, so that the only anxiety among good men now is lest the House of Representatives should be governed by a French faction. I am confirmed in the belief that, if the President speaks with his usual masculine tone of decision upon the dangers of our country and the duties which arise from them, he will be supported by the spirit and feelings of the bulk of the people. All the tools of France and many of their opposers earnestly desire that an envoy may be sent. I think it wrong, but it will take place; and, if accompanied *by vigorous preparations for possible wants*, it may do no great harm, especially if the persons sent are *not Frenchmen*. My own opinion as to the characters suitable is that men should be sought whose principles are unquestionable, their respectability acknowledged, and whose detestation of the French tyrants has not been strongly expressed to the public and is not known.

Your faithful and affectionate friend, G. CABOT.

[1] William Gray, of Salem, the largest ship-owner and merchant in the United States, and lieutenant-governor of Massachusetts in 1810.

[2] See below, p. 582.

Circular Letter referred to in Preceding Letters.

(*Confidential.*)

April 8, 1797.

Sir. — If, in a free country like ours, the public welfare ordinarily, or indeed ever, depends upon the prevalence of just sentiments among the people, it is of the highest importance that such sentiments should prevail at this time, when our political affairs are fast verging to a great and unavoidable crisis. It is not, however, from any peculiar confidence in my own ideas on this subject that I address them to you, but it is because certain facts, rather than opinions, of which I am possessed, ought to be imparted to those whose influence in the community will contribute greatly to preserve its interest and its honor. The two great rivals of Europe, whose ambition so often disturbs the repose of other nations, could not fail to view the United States as an object of great interest to them in all their struggles for power. It is well known that the French, in particular, had determined, from the commencement of the present war against England, that we should become their associate; and at some periods they have had great reason to calculate upon the event. Happily, however, all their attempts to involve us by fraud or by force have been hitherto baffled; but elevated by their unparalleled successes on the land, and irritated by their defeats on the sea, they have long since taken the most outrageous and desperate resolutions against those nations who hold a pacific intercourse with their enemy; they long ago resolved "that they would destroy the commerce which any neutral people should presume to carry on with any of the dominions of England." This unprecedented measure is now executing, and, if unresisted, will doubtless be followed by others more atrocious.

General Pinckney went from the United States *specially instructed on every subject of dispute which now exists.* His credential, of which the Directory have a copy, sets forth that the President, "sincerely desirous to maintain that good understanding which from the commencement of their alliance has subsisted between the two nations, and to efface unfavorable impressions, banish suspicions, and restore that cordiality which was at once the evidence and pledge of a friendly union, had judged it expedient to appoint Mr. Pinckney minister plenipotentiary," &c.

But notwithstanding our minister was thus designated as a

special minister of conciliation, and such terms were used as might have soothed their pride, the Directory have refused to receive him, and the refusal has been accompanied with indignities. Some of the facts relative to this business have been detailed in a letter from Paris dated January 7th, which has appeared in our newspapers, but perhaps it ought *not* to be published, that Mr. de la Croix announced to Mr. Monroe the determination of the Directory *not to receive another minister plenipotentiary from the United States until the grievances of France shall have been redressed.* These grievances are supposed to be those specified by Mr. Adet, and to which our government has already given a complete answer, and by their answer the government must abide. The demands which France makes upon us "to violate a solemn treaty with a powerful nation, to repeal just and necessary laws, and to admit a French consular jurisdiction paramount to our judicial courts," are points that never can be conceded but with the total surrender of independence; and yet *these are to be yielded* (if yielded at all) *as preliminary to any discussion of the questions in dispute*, for we are still to learn what further marks of humiliation would be required of us, if we were to submit to these. We know the choice of our President was viewed as an interesting object on which they bestowed all their influence. As this has failed, they are now prepared to embarrass the new administration. They rely, too, on the exertions of a powerful faction to oppose, at all hazards, the system which has prevailed through the period of Washington's administration. But, whatever may be the success of their operations within our country, it is on our commerce their policy bears with the most force. Viewing our trade as a material prop to British credit, they aim at the destruction of it, in hopes by that means to weaken the power of England. If by this violence and injustice to neutrals they should make them all their enemies, they would still calculate upon being no great losers, for plunder and contributions would be a valuable consideration to those who have no other revenues; and if, in the process, a neutral nation becomes disorganized and ruined, it is of course a natural ally to their system, and will directly or indirectly add to their strength. It seems therefore evident that neutral nations, and ours especially, must either *submit to ruin or resist it:* but if this is the alternative, and we hesitate which to prefer, we are already half undone; for, if our indignation is not excited by the wounds which innocence and

honor receive, public liberty must soon be lost, and private rights will speedily follow. In this delicate conjuncture of affairs, it appears to me necessary that the public mind should be informed and prepared as fast as possible for the efforts we may be called to make. The country should be roused without being inflamed, and by a dispassionate attention to the public dangers should be reconciled to additional taxes, and should strengthen the government by additional confidence in the measures it may adopt. What these will be no man can foretell; but it is not improbable that merchants may be authorized to arm their ships *for defence*, and that the several frigates which are in forwardness may be equipped as convoys, that our most valuable seaports may be further fortified, and probably a military force provided to suppress the insurrections of slaves in those places where the French emissaries or others shall excite them. But, as the preservation or attainment of peace is the only end desired, it is likely that a minister may be always in Europe, authorized to seize any moment to secure that best of blessings. But, whatever there may be in these conjectures, *it is not to be doubted* that the President will be firm, and as far as depends upon him will never concur in degrading the country, and still less in relinquishing its independence. On the other hand, the Jacobin plan will be to enfeeble and divide the public sentiment, that nothing may be done; while, in the mean time, commerce will more and more languish under continued depredations, public credit and private credit may be impaired, and from a general impoverishment distress and despondency must ensue, and, what will be the greatest of all evils, France by the instrumentality of faction will govern the country at last. These ideas are important, so far as they are correct: to me they appear correct, and therefore need no apology for being offered to the friends of the United States.

With great respect, I am, sir,

Your most obedient servant, G. CABOT.

APRIL 10, 1797.

Since writing the foregoing, I am told there are some good people who think it would be wise to send an envoy extraordinary to France, it having been suggested that the rank of minister plenipotentiary is objected to by the Directory. But I answer that the rank of the two characters is the same, and is so established by all

the writers. Beside which, Mr. Pinckney is in *fact* an envoy extraordinary for *special* purposes; and even if it were otherwise, and the rank were different, it would puzzle ingenuity to furnish a reason why they should reject a minister *from* us of the same grade with the highest they ever sent to us. To this I add *that the Directory have not made the objection;* and it must therefore be understood that for the present France has shut the door of negotiation, expecting no doubt that this last step of violence would intimidate our government, and deter them from further defending the rights of our country, or that the people would no longer support their own government.

I am, &c., GEORGE CABOT.

MARSTON WATSON[1] TO CABOT.

MARBLEHEAD, April 14, 1797.

DEAR SIR, — Your confidential communication, dated the 6th, I received yesterday at Boston.

No one can be more impressed than I am with the necessity of giving a currency to sentiments of real patriotism, and a loyal disposition to support the government at the present and approaching important period; and under such persuasion I omit no favorable opportunity, publicly and privately, to express and circulate such opinions and disposition where I have a hope of influence. And I think you have recollection enough of the people of Essex generally, and of those of Marblehead particularly, to believe that nine-tenths of them are fully satisfied in all the truths and reasonings that you have suggested relating to our foreign connections, the objects and measures of France, and their ultimate tendency to the interests and politics of this country, unless independently repressed by our government on the firm support of the voice of the whole nation. I cannot be mistaken in this confidence in my townsmen and neighbors, who, with an ardent desire for the preservation of peace and security, are cordially and firmly devoted to aid the government by any necessary surrender of the lucrative prospects of their commerce, of their capital, or their personal service, whenever the exigencies of the nation shall demand them; and I am happy in believing that these opinions, favorable to the support of

[1] Mr. Watson was a prominent merchant of Marblehead, and afterwards of Boston. His letter is in reply to that just given.

our government and national rights, are not peculiar to our vicinity, but that it is at least very general in New England. From all appearances of the effects of the licentious and ruinous depredations of the French on the property of our citizens, and the indignities to our government on their minds, I cannot but think that your anxiety for the general welfare underestimates the real patriotism of our countrymen generally through the United States; and if it should at once become a national question whether to abandon our rightful honors or interest, or abandon all commercial and political connections with France, or virtually in any way to surrender to them any portion of our independence, that there would be scarcely a hesitation with three-fourths of the people of all classes, as well those with but little information, who would only be governed by their passions, as those who have better opportunity to understand for themselves. And from effects to trace motives and causes, and consequently, like members of a free nation, vindicate and support the government to the utmost extremity, I confess I can see the mischievous wishes of the bad men among us with the same concern that you do; but I have rather more confidence in the insignificance of their power, and that France and all other nations will be soon satisfied of that truth. I know that you are assured of my fullest concurrence with your sentiments and wishes, and that no favorable opportunity will be lost to produce any influence favorable to them.

I am, with esteem, sincerely yours, M. WATSON.

My acquaintance with Congressional folks is so small that I have never been informed whether the objection to the land-tax originated in political motives, or only from the strong hand of economy in the landed interest. But, whatever it was, I think it is to be lamented that it did not prevail. Justice as well as urgent patriotism certainly demands some more direct contributions from that part of the community; and I sincerely hope that at the ensuing session Congress will agree to think so.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, April 17, 1797.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Jeremiah Smith, who called on me yesterday, tells me that a difference of sentiment prevails among you great men in and *out* of the cabinet, respecting the expediency of

a new embassy to France. From the facts which have been stated to me, I do not see how we can possibly find new messengers, with the expectation that they will not be kicked from the door, unless we first appease those to whom the visit is intended, by performing the penance they have prescribed; and this *all* agree is impossible for us to do.

I confess to you I was struck with the formal precision of the words used by the Directory. The literal sense of the declaration would be saved, though they were to receive an embassy from us, if it were other than a minister plenipotentiary. But why this equivocation? Surely it was to leave the door open for accommodation, if the actual state of things should render it desirable to them. If they have not acted upon some such principle, the new embassy would be fruitless; and, if they have, it is unnecessary, because in this latter case they will be guided in their conduct toward us by events in Europe and the circumstances of their own country.

But I take it for granted the only solid argument in favor of a new embassy is the tendency of it to satisfy popular opinion here, and to unite the country in the measures which must be taken after ill success. I am afraid this argument claims more weight than it truly merits. I conceive that the government has attempted negotiation already, as far as it can without abasement; and, if the knowledge of this does not satisfy the country, it is not certain that any thing that can be done will satisfy them. But my fears concerning the effects of a new embassy are that France will strengthen her party by it. She will know our motive to be to put her so clearly in the wrong that her friends here can be no longer her advocates; but, as she must know this, she can with certainty counteract us, and by a very obvious policy give to her friends new strength.

She can propose to the new embassy a treaty which shall contain many things which would be extremely popular, accompanied with some requisitions which we could not grant without present dishonor, and ultimately a war with another nation. The commissioners would reject such a project, if they are honest; but the party in this country would then be able to rally again. France is now grown, and daily growing, more odious to the people; but from a thousand causes this weaning from folly is a difficult work, and I incline to think France would now gladly prevent its being

perfected. If therefore, according to my ideas, the result of a new embassy *may be* to supply new means to the French party now exhausted, the danger of this may be a fair offset against the hope of uniting the country in some efficient mode of defence. At the same time I express these as my own opinions, it is impossible that the mass of the people should not (if left to themselves) prefer one more attempt to persuade our French brethren to do justice and be friends. Public attention is pretty well excited in this quarter, and hitherto the public mind has held a right course. I should imagine, by the time Congress meets, we shall be willing to take such burthens as may be reasonable to lay upon us. I think, however, much will depend upon the tone of the government: if it is masculine, our notes will conform. I hope the President will speak decidedly upon every topic that is connected with the business of the meeting; and especially, *if it is clear that we cannot and ought not attempt further negotiation*, I hope he will say it. Mrs. Cabot tells me the chaise is waiting to carry us to Judge Lowell's, and that I must give her love and close my letter.

Yours faithfully, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO JEREMIAH SMITH.

[The following letter is the "copy of one addressed to a few friends," referred to in the next letter to Gore. See p. 133.]

BROOKLINE, April 17, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR, — It is easy to say what ought *not* to be done in certain conjunctures, but difficult to determine what *ought*. The truth is that we often arrive at a dilemma in which something must be done, and yet that something must appear to be wrong; for the inconveniences of the course taken, whatever it be, must be considerable, and will be the most known and the only ones felt. But no considerations of this kind will deter many men, whom I am proud to call friends, from adopting any measures which, in their judgment, the public good may require. What are these measures, you ask? I wish I could give a satisfactory reply to the question, but I confess I cannot. There is, however, in my mind no difficulty in deciding that an embargo would be much more injurious to us than all depredations will be, — much more injurious to us than to the French; and, indeed, much more to the other nations who have colonies than to the French. It would be particularly incon-

venient to the English, who are now fighting for the independence of the neutral nations which remain unconquered by France. This idea is so obvious that I shall expect many zealous advocates for an embargo among those who prefer the interests of France to those of the United States. As a *permanent* measure or principal measure in any system, I consider an embargo as always preposterous, being necessarily more distressing to the nation that imposes it than to the nation against which it is intended to operate; but there is an infinitude of cases in which *partial*, *special*, or *temporary* embargoes may be expedient, and therefore at all times of public danger the executive ought to be authorized by law to lay them. In the most probable cases, this power cannot be exercised directly by Congress, without defeating its own designs. I now release you from the embargo, and proceed to express my hopes that the first measures of Congress will be to provide more revenue. A land-tax, however unpalatable at first, will be approved by the people themselves, after they are brought to contemplate a little more soberly the *nature and extent of the public dangers*. The few frigates which are in forwardness ought to be equipped forthwith, and the merchants should be authorized to defend their vessels, as far as it can be done without actual war. If no better idea occurs on the point, let convoys accompany them, who shall fulfil the twenty-seventh article of the treaty, which prescribes the conduct of armed vessels of one nation towards the trading vessels of another. In the West India scene, where we suffer greatly from little paltry pirates, this sort of defence would be sufficient generally; but a minute examination of the rights of nations is requisite, to enable a man to delineate this system fully. Our most valuable and exposed seaports should be better fortified, and a small military corps raised and established to keep the fortresses. Thus prepared and provided for the worst, I would *diplomatically* declare that none of these things are to be understood as making a rupture with France; but that, on the contrary, *no offence is authorized* against the *persons*, *properties*, or *rights* of the French Republic, or any of its citizens, to whom we are disposed to do justice as we always have done, and with whom we wish to be at peace; but that the measures are solely defensive, &c. If these measures can be carried, adjourn for three months.

With respect to a new embassy, it would be disgraceful, and indicate a dread of France, which is already too great; but my

principal objection to it is that it may be easily made the means of recruiting the exhausted strength of the French party within our country,* and their mischiefs are more to be dreaded than any their masters can perpetrate *without*.

Thus, my friend, you see with what readiness I give you my crudest opinions. If they are erroneous, it will be satisfactory that they have no authority, and I no responsibility. But, before I close this letter, let me entreat you to be at Philadelphia on the day mentioned by the President. Probably you will then find a well-digested plan of the executive, which, *if not repugnant to your own ideas*, you will zealously support. If no system is formed by the executive, or such as shall be formed is not supported, there will be no consistency, and of course no efficiency, in our measures. If I were to fill another sheet, I should probably suggest nothing which has not been familiar to your mind. There can be nothing new in this. It is, however, the best return I can make to your *very flattering letter*, and may be regarded as an additional proof of the great esteem with which I am

Truly your friend, &c.[1] G. CABOT.

* E.g., by making propositions which would be popular here, and only insisting on one or two points which would involve us in a contest with Great Britain. — G. C.

CABOT TO GORE.

BROOKLINE, April 17, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR, — I am so much in your debt for letters and other favors that I hardly dare to acknowledge the extent, unless I could be assured you would take the acknowledgment for payment, or at least as a compensation for giving time. It is impossible that your official duties,[2] with all their perplexities, should so far engross your thoughts as to prevent your notice of the interesting events which occupy us here; and I wish it were in my power to satisfy in any degree the desire you must feel to know our measures and their success. My own indolence, which I thought nothing could overcome, has given way to my anxiety for the cause of order and of our country. You may have seen that I was taken as your *suppléant* in the difficult office of rectifying

[1] This letter has been already printed in Morison's Life of Smith, p. 98.

[2] Mr. Gore was at this time in London, as one of the commissioners under the Jay treaty.

public opinion;[1] and, if I have been less successful, you will attribute it to the proper causes. The enclosed copy of a letter,[2] which I addressed to a few friends, will show you my course of thinking on the subject which is to engage Congress; and I am not without hopes that the people will be disposed to support measures of energy, though a little burdensome, when they are brought to see the public dangers in their true light. If the country should be put into a posture of defence, adequate revenues provided, and convoys allowed to *enforce* and fulfil the twenty-seventh article of the treaty with France, and a diplomatic declaration that all these measures are purely defensive, and not to be understood to mean any thing like a rupture, — that, on the contrary, no *offence* is authorized against the persons, properties, or rights of the French Republic, or any of its citizens, to all of whom we will for ever render complete justice, and with whom we earnestly wish to remain at peace, — I should expect ultimately to see our dignity preserved. But I am very recently informed that a friend of ours at New York, whose opinions are almost always the wisest in the world, thinks that a new embassy is advisable, to consist of Mr. Pinckney, now in Holland, Mr. Madison, and some person from this quarter. I have not heard the reasons for this measure, but imagine the principal one to be its tendency to unite the country in a system of vigorous defence, if it fails. But, having viewed it in all the attitudes my imagination could place it, I confess my apprehension is very strong that France would seize upon the occasion to renew the exhausted strength of her party in the United States. This she might do by profuse promises, which, as they never would be fulfilled, could cost nothing, and by insisting on one or two points, the yielding of which would involve us in new difficulties with another nation. Besides, if France has left open a way to *back out*, she will use it or not, as events in Europe may determine her. If she is full of power, our humiliating overtures will be fruitless; and, if she is distressed, they will be unnecessary. In a word, although peace is not to be abandoned by the government so long as it is possible to retain it, yet I believe that the people at this moment are prepared to take a proper tone, if the government will give it. Adet is about to sail for France; and I understand that he tells his

[1] Mr. Cabot had sent to Mr. Gore a copy of the circular letter given above, p. 124.

[2] This refers to the letter just given, addressed to Jeremiah Smith.

confidants that there will be no war, but that every thing will be accommodated as soon as he arrives, or his letters reach Paris. Almost all the tools of France have held up the idea that France would not make war upon us, *but only plunder our commerce in their own defence* and to punish us for having sacrificed their interests in the British treaty; but I am well persuaded that Adet is greatly disappointed in the effect of their measures upon the country, and, above all, the effects of Pickering's letter.[1]

You know very well that all power has been concentrating in the House of Representatives. It has made great progress, and much must therefore depend upon them; and they depend upon Gallatin. Yours truly, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, April 22, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR, — Since I wrote you last, Mr. Swan[2] has returned from New York, where he had been to have a last interview with Adet, who is about sailing for France. Swan has stated to a friend of mine that Adet has no expectation of a war, but relies fully that all misunderstandings will be cleared up immediately upon his arrival in France, or upon the arrival of his letters, if he himself fails. Thus far Mr. Swan, whom you know.

If Adet does confide his sentiments to Swan, he cannot wish them to remain secret. It is conceivable that Adet may wish to see the influence of his nation recovered by a conciliatory conduct toward the United States; but it is more probable that he wishes, by exciting this idea here, to prevent all preparatory measures against a different conduct. It has been a striking artifice in the Revolutionists to divide and disarm those they intended to attack, by leading them to expect moderation and justice. But, in every instance of nations and individuals, the credulous have become victims; and I cannot but fear that we, too, are destined to suffer from this kind of folly. It is hardly within possibility that the House of Representatives should not temporize rather than act

[1] The reply to Adet's charges in the letter to our minister at Paris, already referred to, p. 112.

[2] Colonel James Swan. Born in Scotland, he came in early youth to Boston. He served through the Revolution with distinction, and was a wealthy merchant and writer of some note. The last fifteen years of his life he passed in a debtors' prison in Paris.

with decision, unless new events occur before they meet, which shall rouse them *by rousing the country.*

I am well persuaded, however, that, if the House should unite with the other branches in measures of suitable vigor, the country will go along with the government, and support it with constancy. I think, too, that firmness and prudence well combined would carry us safe through the crisis, and that France, upon the return of adversity, which will come, will respect us more and treat us better. She now despises us, as she does all who do not resist her; and she always respects the English above every other people.

Yours truly, G. CABOT.

At an early period, you asked of me "what the people would think should be done by the government to ward off the impending evils." I answered then that they would take their opinion from the government, if the government has one. But I ought perhaps to state to you now that the expediency of sending an envoy is more generally admitted than denied. At the same time, I believe it is expected that other measures of preparation will be taken, so that we may be ready for the worst events. I repeat to all my acquaintances my fears that, if an envoy is sent and received, the French will completely re-establish their undue influence in our country.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, May 12, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR, — Since the receipt of your favor of the 5th, which was handed me last evening, I have revolved the subject of it in my mind as frequently as the time would admit; and finally I could think of no persons in this State, whose names I would mention for commissioner on the British debts, except Mr. Jackson,[1] the supervisor, or my quondam colleague, Mr. Strong. Both these gentlemen deservedly possess the public confidence, and are habituated to those patient investigations which the office may require. My preference would be for Mr. Jackson, because, *ceteris paribus*, treaty makers should be kept free from the imputations

[1] Jonathan Jackson, of Newburyport. He was for many years prominent in Massachusetts politics, and a successful merchant. He was the father of Judge Jackson, of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, of Dr. James Jackson, and of Patrick Tracy Jackson, the eminent merchant and manufacturer.

of deriving individual benefit from that public act. In every other point of view, Mr. Strong will doubtless be an unexceptionable character. Whether either of the gentlemen would engage in this service, I am unable to say; but I will try to ascertain Mr. Jackson's disposition, and inform you by the next post. The union of the four commissioners in the choice of any fifth man would probably strengthen his inclination to accept the office, as it would place him in a situation of great respectability, and where the duty of impartiality would be rendered easier from the *peculiar* greatness of its obligation.

I am five miles from the post-office, and therefore can add nothing to these first impressions now; but, if any thing further occurs, it shall follow by the succeeding post.

Yours faithfully, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, May 14, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR, — I thought it a fulfilment of your desires to ascertain whether Mr. Jackson would engage as a fifth commissioner, if he were invited. I therefore communicated to him the substance of your inquiry, and added that I had mentioned his name to my correspondent at Philadelphia, as one that might be compared with others; but he readily decided that it would be impossible for him to execute the commission, if it should be offered, alleging, among other reasons, that his state of health forbids a journey southward, and that the business of his present office (not perfectly ordered by his predecessor) would require the careful labor of several months to arrange with propriety.

I take it for granted that your intention is to form a list of the best names, and from these to select the most suitable character. If, however, it should be thought expedient to take a man in this part of the Union, I think Brother Strong unites excellent qualities for the office. He is happy in a moderation of manner, which has prevented his firmness of purpose from giving offence, and therefore may conciliate the good opinion of the South, while he highly enjoys that of the North.

Very respectfully and affectionately,

I remain your constant friend,

G. CABOT.

Cabot to Wolcott.

Brookline, May 15, 1797.

My dear Sir, — Almost all men seem finally to expect that an envoy extraordinary is to be sent to France; but no one has attempted to show the propriety of such a step, except that its tendency is to unite the country eventually. I had one conversation with Ames upon this subject, in which he supported the measure, chiefly on the ground that without it the government could do nothing, and with it might be brought to prepare for an ultimate efficient defence. After all I have heard and all I have been able to imagine, my mind is still as unsatisfied as at first. I often ask myself what instructions can be given to the new minister, that will not immediately bring us to issue with France. To say that he shall not enter the Republic, until a recognition is promised, is making a point at the outset, which, while Mr. Pinckney remains alone at the door, may be possibly avoided. And yet I can have no idea of an envoy being put on any other terms. Again, is it possible that an acknowledgment can be made on the part of the United States *that they have done wrong towards France?* If they were disposed to make such an acknowledgment in general terms, it would be impossible to point out the particular case. Even our Jacobins are brought to confess that the United States have done nothing which they had not good right to do; but they complain that our government did not forbear to do what (though right in itself) must have been known would displease our allies, and so make them quarrel with us, or rather punish us. Again, can we send a minister without instructing him, when received by the French, to ask of them *some* reparation for all the injuries their agents and servants have done us? If not to these ends, to what does the mission aim? France is acting as I have seen a cunning knave in private life, — first commit the most insufferable injuries, and then take the high ground of complainant. In such a case, no good can come from an act which will place the injured party in the attitude of entreaty, weakness, and fear. I still wish it were possible for our country to assume a dignified countenance, and, without provoking hostilities, prepare to repel them. I am well persuaded, if we could do this, all would be well. The hope of seducing us *within*, or coercing us *without*, would be extinct; and France would not then suppose it for her interest to quarrel with

us. It cannot be denied that the people wish to avoid new taxes, and especially one upon land; but the rapidity with which the people have come to a right way of thinking on French politics leads me to believe that almost any measures the government may take would be approved, and especially if accompanied with an address to the people, explaining the necessity and pointing to the public danger. But, after all, my greatest reliance is that Great Britain will keep the monster at bay, until he destroys himself or becomes less dangerous to others; and I cannot believe that any vicissitudes in the internal affairs of England will sensibly diminish their naval strength, or divert its application, as long as France remains formidable. England certainly possesses abundant means of every kind to defend herself against France, and as many of the powers on the continent as France can compel to act as auxiliaries. I shall not believe therefore, until I see it, that England will yield in the present contest. Mr. Erskine, Mr. Waddington, and some thousands of others, will try at every period of misfortune to displace the ministers; but the government, the landed as well as other property of the nation, the weight of character, and essentially the body of the nation, must and do hate France, and will under all circumstances fight France as long as they can.

Farewell. G. CABOT.

TUESDAY, May 16.

Since writing the preceding, I have received a letter from Mr. King, by which it appears that he considers the late proceedings in England as a fair commencement of a paper-money system. It was evident to us all that, if the stoppage of payment in gold and silver were not merely a thing of a day, and resulting from causes in their nature of short duration, a paper currency must take place; but is any way of managing these unavoidable difficulties less hazardous?

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, May 22, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR, — I thank you sincerely for the copy of the President's message with its accompaniments from your office, which you were so good as to send me. It is abundantly evident now that the first opinion I formed was a just one, of the benefit which the community would derive from your letter to Mr. Pinck-

ney. The French disease will yield to powerful discutients, if to any thing.

We are all charmed with the speech of the President, and I am persuaded this part of the country will support the policy he indicates.

Accept my unfeigned regards, and be assured of my highest esteem. G. CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, May 31, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR, — If it were doubtful whether the government could give a tone to the nation, I think the effect of the President's speech is a proof of its truth.

All the Federalists, and *many others*, approve highly the style he has used, and swear to support him. Still, however, we look with anxiety for the address of the House, as it shall finally pass; for, if the representatives fall off, they will be followed by many of the people.

Our Legislature assembles this day, and it is expected they will express their coincidence of opinion with the President. With a hope to stimulate them to this proper conduct, I threw into the "Centinel" of this date a piece signed "One of the American People."[1] When this is done, I shall hope you will think my apostleship may be suspended as no longer necessary, and I hope you will be persuaded that I have faithfully executed the trust. We are told, and I believe it to be true, that our eastern district will send a recruit to the Federal party, by electing Parker instead of Dearborn.

Brother Ellsworth, a few days since, made us a friendly visit of three or four hours, and gave us a more realizing view of your family than we had enjoyed for a long time. We are to see him again to-morrow evening. He perceives with some triumph that my political faith has been a little strengthened by the manifestations of right temper among the people since the publication of the speech. If Congress should be disposed to do all that they ought, I trust they will rescue us from the continued disgrace of starving our public officers; and, when this happens, I shall hope you will have it in your power to draw every good man you need as an

[1] See below, p. 584.

auxiliary in your department, and that you will no longer delay to expel a commissioned traitor.[1] Expectation has been alive since the appearance of an infamous letter, *as it is called;* but, for my own part, whether the letter was written by the person to whom it is imputed or not, I should always have believed the sentiments are precisely those he maintains. Indeed, the attack he made publicly upon Adams, in his note to a printer, was no less scandalous. In all these things, I devoutly acknowledge the hand of Providence; and, if I would be persuaded that *we deserve* these kind interferences, I could be as easy as some of our friends.

G. CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, June 27, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have just returned from a circuitous journey of four hundred miles, which has occupied seventeen or eighteen days. Your favor of the 8th I found upon my table at my arrival here.

In passing up the Merrimac and down the Connecticut, one hundred and fifty miles on each river, I found the people everywhere maintaining more just sentiments of our political affairs than I had conceived possible after so much pains had been taken to mislead them.

At Concord, I was in the House of Representatives when the address in answer to Governor Gilman's speech was discussed; and I can assure you I never saw *in any assembly* so much of the right sort of American spirit. Of one hundred and thirty-one members, there were not more than four or five tainted with Jacobinism; and although twenty-eight voted against the address, yet most of these acted upon the principle of accommodating the four or five who professed to desire only a little less force in the expression *of what all agreed was the public sentiment.* In the Upper House there was equal union and spirit; and I am persuaded nineteen-twentieths of these men would have marched, with Governor Gilman at their head, upon a moment's call, to defend the country and its government against France, — as Stark and his followers did to repel the British in 1777. When I came into Vermont, I found

[1] This refers to Tench Coxe, shortly after dismissed by Wolcott for official misconduct. See p. 148. See also Administrations of Washington and Adams, II. 6, 9.

the same temper and spirit; so that I could not forbear to conclude that the disaffection in Boston and its vicinity is almost all that exists in New England, for I consider the paltry opposition of Portsmouth as only sufficient to blow the fire of patriotism in the rest of the State of New Hampshire.

I have seen by the newspapers that Ames was nominated for a fifth commissioner. I should have mentioned him with the first men, if I had not considered his ill-health as a total disqualification. I had just visited him, and he appeared too feeble to attend to business of any sort.

We resist the French successfully in our own country, but they beat us in Europe. If England revolves, our tranquillity must be disturbed; but I still hope and confide that England *in every supposable condition* will command the ferry, and that interest and pride will always stimulate her to keep the French boats from passing. . . . Your unfeigned friend,

G. CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, Oct. 4, 1797.

DEAR SIR, — I am greatly obliged to you for the pamphlet you sent me, as I felt a strong desire to see the argument which should prove conclusively that the knight would be a knave, if he was not by nature a fool.[1]

I am persuaded this subject stands pretty well in the public view already; but I am nevertheless convinced that, since the policy of France has dragged our executive into the street, it is best to make the people who are there understand that we are wholly right, and our accusers altogether wrong.

I hope therefore your letter will be communicated to Congress, that it may be regularly published.

In a late letter from Mr. Gore, he informs me that the office of consul will soon be vacated by the return of Mr. Johnson to Maryland; and, as it is of much public importance that the consulship in such a city as London should be well filled, he expresses a

[1] This refers to a letter from Pickering to the Chevalier de Yrujo, the Spanish minister. Yrujo had become unpopular from his libel suits against Cobbett. His intrigues with the Democrats also gave a peculiar zest to this sharp state paper, which Pickering afterwards transmitted to Congress with his official report. See, for full account, Life and Works of Pickering, III. 396–411 inclusive.

solicitude that among the candidates the best should be selected. His own opinion is decidedly in favor of Mr. Williams,[1] our consul at Hamburg, who he thinks would accept the trust. I have formerly expressed to you my opinion, and that of the commercial men who know him in this quarter; and I repeat that his sound understanding and well-established character and principles render him in my estimation highly deserving of public confidence.

I rejoice that at this period of distress in the city of Philadelphia[2] you and your family are so remote from the scene; and, wherever you may be, I pray for the welfare of you and yours, being, with sincere esteem and affection,

Your faithful friend, GEORGE CABOT.

[1] See above, p. 100, note.

[2] This refers to the yellow fever, which raged with great violence in Philadelphia during the summer of 1797. Despite his precaution, Colonel Pickering lost a child from the disease.

CHAPTER VI.

1798.

Declines Secretaryship of Navy. — Renewed Political Activity. — Affair of the Major-Generals. — Opinion of Gerry and Marshall. — Correspondence.

THE winter of 1797–1798 in Philadelphia passed away unmarked, except by the ever-increasing bitterness of party hostility. Meanwhile, the American envoys, in Paris, were subjected to the insults and intrigues of Talleyrand. No definitive tidings came from them until March, when the President sent a message to Congress, announcing that the negotiation had failed, and that the country must arm. The Federalists received the message with exultation; and, though Jefferson at once pronounced it "insane," the opposition was for the moment demoralized. But they soon rallied; and although so keenly alive to the dignity of the country, so sensitive to British insults, so bellicose even in 1794, they were now filled with a generous enthusiasm for peace and moderation. A series of dilatory resolutions were introduced, and in the course of the debate a call was made for papers and despatches. The amiable Giles, by whose exertions the demand was made as sweeping as possible, little imagined the result of his request; for the President, in reply to the call, sent to Congress the famous X. Y. Z. letters, and in a moment the whole country was aflame. The now famous cry, "Millions for defence, not one cent for tribute," rose on all sides. Opposition faded away, and even Jefferson quailed before the storm.

By the tone of the President's message, Mr. Cabot was roused to renewed exertions. He again strove by every

means, by articles in the papers and by personal exhortations, to stimulate public feeling; and he regarded the publication of the X. Y. Z. letters as a most fortunate event for the country. The attitude of France thus disclosed was no surprise to him, and his only feeling was one of profound satisfaction that the true character and feeling of the French should be brought home so forcibly to the American people.

The strength of the popular indignation enabled the Federalists to make provision for an army and navy, and to establish a separate department for the latter branch of the service. To the new secretaryship thus created, Mr. Cabot was appointed. Mr. Adams said subsequently, in his letters to the "Boston Patriot," "I afterwards nominated Mr. Cabot to be Secretary of the Navy, a station as useful, as important, and as honorable as the other,[1] and for which he was eminently qualified."[2] Mr. Cabot's name was at once sent to the Senate, and confirmed without opposition. The commission was made out, and immediately forwarded to him by Colonel Pickering, together with a private letter warmly urging his acceptance of the post. Mr. Cabot's honest belief in his own unfitness, combined with his dislike of publicity and great natural indolence, led him to refuse an office for which he was well suited and in which he might have rendered important services. The reasons alleged in his letter certainly do not, it must be confessed, justify the refusal of such an appointment at such a time, although for his own comfort and peace of mind, especially in view of after events, it was well that he declined as he did. Fortunately, too, neither the administration nor the country was embarrassed by his refusal, since his successor,[3] Mr. Stoddert, proved himself in every respect an able and efficient officer.

[1] That of envoy to France.

[2] Works of John Adams, IX 287.

[3] I say successor, because Mr. Cabot actually held the office for a month; and his name stands first on the list of secretaries of the navy.

By the disclosure of all the secrets of the negotiations, the infamous demands of the French were at last understood throughout the country. Addresses, manifesting a thorough popular appreciation of his vigorous policy, poured in upon the President; and this phase of public sentiment, as may be seen by his letters to Wolcott, of course afforded to Mr. Cabot the greatest possible gratification. The President replied to these addresses with the greatest fervor, and pushed with vigor the warlike preparations. The most important business was of course the organization of the provisional army; and to but one man could this duty be entrusted. Washington, summoned from retirement by the universal demand of the people, accepted the new task, on condition that he should not be called into active service until hostilities fairly began, and that he should be allowed to name the general officers. To these conditions the President assented; and Washington sent in a list, which gave Hamilton the first place, Pinckney the second, and Knox the third. In this order, too, the nominations were sent to the Senate, and by them confirmed. Against this arrangement Knox rebelled, demanding the first place; and Mr. Adams not only listened to his remonstrances, but seemed inclined to yield to his requests. Such a change in the position of the major-generals was wholly indefensible, technically as well as politically, and was also inconsistent in principle with the other appointments which Mr. Adams was then daily making. Even if Hamilton was regarded with indifference by the masses of the party, he was no less the first choice of Washington than of the Federalist leaders throughout the country; and it should be remembered that those were the days of leaders, and when they were satisfied the rest of the party generally followed them, without much delay. Knox, on the other hand, had no strength in the party, and in abilities was certainly far inferior to Hamilton. To put him at the head of the list, therefore, conduced neither to party unity nor to the good of the public service. Even to

hint at such a change was a grievous mistake; and one is at a loss to know why Mr. Adams should have committed it. The only apparent solution is that Mr. Adams's deeply rooted dislike and distrust of Hamilton, inflamed by Knox and stimulated by the opportunity, flared up, and found in this change of rank a dangerous expression.

Mr. Cabot, of course, shared in the alarm excited among the leading Federalists by this sudden disposition on the President's part. Most anxious for party harmony, he wrote to the President, not only urging Hamilton's claim to the first place, but especially pressing on his attention the grave danger of serious party dissensions, if a change were now made. Whether Mr. Adams, despite representations of this sort from all sides, would still have persisted cannot be determined; but a voice which no American at that day dared to disregard was now heard to demand that the original order of appointments should remain untouched. Mr. Adams yielded to the request of Washington, and the threatened quarrel was averted, but unhappily not forgotten. Mr. Cabot was greatly disturbed by the whole affair, and strove in every way to allay the angry feelings which had been excited. His one thought was for his party and its policy, so greatly endangered by the struggle for rank.

While this affair was in progress, Gerry returned from France; and his intimacy with the President awakened suspicions that he had a hand in changing the relative positions of the major-generals. Gerry was also very justly distrusted on account of his inexplicable and dubious conduct while in Paris; so that the Federalists, well aware of the President's strange partiality for him, watched his course with extreme anxiety. Mr. Adams's hasty and unguarded utterances with reference to French affairs were widely circulated; and these, together with his apparent desire to screen Gerry and his local separation from his cabinet, were topics which occupied Mr. Cabot's thoughts

and filled his letters during the latter part of this year. Then, as always, he especially dreaded any conduct which might give to the policy and actions of the administration the least appearance of weakness, indecision, or dissension.

One other subject, frequently referred to in the letters of 1798, offers a curious example of the rigidity with which party lines were then drawn. Congress had, before their adjournment the previous summer, passed the famous alien and sedition laws, which were generally accepted by the administration and its supporters as very wholesome measures. One of the wisest and coolest of the Federalists, however, John Marshall, then just on the threshold of his great career, expressed in the "Freeholder" his opposition to these laws. His party friends were dismayed, and so much feeling was aroused that any defence of him was very ill received. Ames says: "John Marshall, with all his honors in blossom and bearing fruit, answers some newspaper queries unfavorably to those laws. George Cabot says that Otis, our representative, condemns him *ore rotundo*, yet, inconsistently enough, sedulously declares his dislike of those laws. George Cabot vindicates John Marshall, and stoutly asserts his soundness of Federalism. I deny it."[1] Ames was by no means the sternest of party men; and yet he was amazed apparently that Mr. Cabot should defend any one convicted of so bad a lapse from grace as Marshall. Indeed, Mr. Cabot himself speaks in a rather deprecating tone, even while he defends Marshall most stoutly. With all their great virtues and abilities, there was a good deal of dogmatism about the Federalists of that day.

[1] Works of Fisher Ames, II. 246.

Cabot to Pickering.

Brookline, 9th January, 1798.

My dear Sir, — The bare possibility that you may not have received from any other hand Lord Malmesbury's negotiation induces me to transmit the enclosed paper.

My letter from England announces the expectation there that the arms of the French Republic are next to be employed in *reducing Spain to the form of a province*, in expunging Portugal from the catalogue of nations, and in subverting and plundering Hamburg and Denmark. Like the Romans, whom they imitate, war and rapine are necessary to their existence; and if the modern Carthage does not restrain them, and they remain united, doubtless they will revolutionize the whole civilized world, and we must again fight for our independence, or lose it. If, however, England is not destroyed by internal faction, she will be able to keep the monsters in their den until they devour each other. Accept, my dear sir, my unfeigned wishes for the welfare of you and all yours.

G. Cabot.

Cabot to Wolcott.

Brookline, Jan. 19, 1798.

My dear Sir, — I rejoice to hear that you have finally expelled a traitor from the Treasury, who never deserved to have been trusted.[1] The toleration of such a fellow in office after his duplicity was known indicates truly a weakness in the government, and I have never yet believed that this kind of policy was wise. Let the government be just and upright in every thing; but the higher it holds its head, the more people will look up to it, while, if it abases itself even by the affectation of humility, it will certainly be despised and trampled under the feet of barbarous Democrats.

I have late letters from Europe, which mention the designs of France to plunder Hamburg and invade Denmark, and that Prussia is beginning to ferment with Jacobin leaven, which, if it works powerfully, is to be accompanied by a Jacobin invasion. These projects, with those meditated against Spain and Portugal, are sufficient to occupy the Parisian horde till a new convulsion may call them to their own dens. In the mean time, *we* are learn-

[1] Tench Coxe again.

ing something, though slowly, on this interesting subject. I keep my house, but sometimes scribble for the good of others. In the first page of the "Mercury," I appear as "A Sincere Lover of my Country," and am preparing to appear again as a "Political Monitor."[1] Thus you see I try to help a little in the good cause.

Yours *fideliter*, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, Feb. 9, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR, — I can't say that I am much grieved at the attack made on you in Bache's paper.[2] "Improbis vituperari laudari est." So that there is as much sweet as bitter in the potion that is served up. Besides, every government has its weak sides, and ours has many: it is but just, therefore, its enemies should attack those points from which they are easily repelled, and I have often been proud to see that the close texture of many of our public characters was impervious. Your friends laugh to see the charge that has been advanced, and think its folly full as great as its indignity. I am much flattered with your enclosure of 27th ult., and assure you that I feel always interested in whatever concerns you or yours, being, very sincerely,

Your affectionate friend, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, 23d March, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR, — I thank you for the trouble it cost to transmit my letter from Mr. King, and for the few lines with which it was accompanied. Well knowing the incessant labors and ill-requited services of every faithful man in the higher offices of our government, I always feel reluctant to occupy any part of their time.

Mr. King's letter is short and gloomy; but he has appeared to me to despond too much heretofore, and therefore I would persuade myself that he now overshades his picture. But, however this may be, I cannot dissemble my apprehensions that a melancholy destiny is allotted to our country, if England yields to France. Undoubtedly, the designs of France to subject to her

[1] See below, pp. 586, 588.

[2] The famous, or, perhaps in view of the attacks on Washington, infamous, "Aurora."

own control every nation of the civilized world are, and have been, systematically pursued by every party that has governed. Every thing in France is resolved into force, and she has discovered the secret of dividing, and of course weakening, every nation whom she wishes to subdue. Indeed, she may be said to have *natural* allies numerous and powerful in every state; and, I add, *most numerous and most powerful in the freest states*, where the mildness of government encourages faction to attempt every thing, because it hopes for every thing.

Your affectionate friend, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, March 26, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have written to you less frequently than might have been expected, because I have felt no disposition to have any thing like an agency in political affairs, and because I have thought it little less than criminal to occupy any part of the time of our public *slaves*. Indeed, such is my sympathy with many of our public men that it has become extremely painful to think of their tasks.

I live perfectly recluse, scarcely going beyond the limits of my farm once in a month. I do not pretend, however, to be uninterested in what passes in the world; on the contrary, I partake in all the anxieties of those who foresee and tremble at the destiny of our country. But, while I am so selfish as to applaud myself for shunning all responsibility which might belong to official character, I have omitted no opportunity to inculcate just sentiments upon those who hear me prate, or read what I write; for I have often been tempted to write by the belief that public opinion depended much on the newspapers, and that I could say something that would be useful. It ought to be some compensation to our executive officers to know that their administration is universally approved and generally admired by the wise and the good. These, as far as I can learn their sentiments, have thought that the Adams administration has done every thing in its power to rescue the country from dishonor and the servitude with which it is threatened; but I confess to you there prevails everywhere in this quarter a despondency that is alarming. The truth is that the spirit of the country has been sinking from the time that the House of Rep-

resentatives, in June last, discovered their disposition to submit to the aggressions of France rather than to prepare to repel them. At that moment, if the legislature had been as faithful to their trust as the executive, I have not the smallest doubt the indignation of all the States (on this side the Delaware, at least) would have been sufficiently roused, and that France would have seen that there was a point at which her provocations must stop, *or she would lose this country.* But the people have been taught by the example, and still more explicitly by the language of the House of Representatives, that it is expedient to submit to a foreign domination rather than hazard its resentment by declaring we will maintain our rights. We are now so accustomed to this humiliation that it ceases to disquiet us, and for every new disgrace that is thrown upon us we seek for excuses to bear it without impatience. We are ashamed to acknowledge the influence of our fears, and yet we show that they repress every sentiment of honor. Perhaps no misfortune greater than this could happen to our country, as regarding its independence. The independence of the smallest states has often been secured against the rapacious ambition of the greatest by a desperate resolution to defend themselves in every extremity; and although it is evident that France meditates the subjugation or destruction of every civilized nation, yet, as she acts always in each case upon calculations of the advantage of success and the disadvantage of failure, I am fully satisfied she would never attempt to subdue the United States by force, if she were to see us unitedly determined to resist her with vigor. At present, we certainly invite rather than discourage her attacks, and I am not sure that the executive can excite in either the legislature or the people a just indignation or a *proper* sense of the public danger. But this I know: it is the duty of the executive to attempt it, and of every good citizen to co-operate. I hope, therefore, the President will persist in the manly course he has hitherto trod, and that he will tell *plainly* and *forcibly* to Congress and the people their *danger* and their *duties* as they appear to him, and say to them they must not slight the former as an excuse for neglecting the latter. If this will not do all that is wished, it will do the best that can be done; and, if we are to be lost finally, it will be a consolatory reflection to the executive and its friends that they have done their duty. It would be a greater undertaking for France to conquer us, if we were united, than to conquer Germany and all the southwestern parts of Europe. Sooner than attempt it, if we were

united, she would certainly be peaceable on terms that would leave us the government of our own country; but if we remain divided and imbecile, as seems probable, we must undoubtedly be a colony to France, if England will consent or is obliged to leave the sea. I have long seen that the fate of the civilized world is probably to be decided by the issue of the present contest between France and England; and I confess I see no reason to doubt that England will triumph at last, if the nation continues tolerably united. Mr. King is gloomy; but he has constantly been so, and I cannot but think he stands at a point from whence the power of England is never seen with advantage. England is a free country, and the force of faction which proves it free gives it the appearance of division and weakness. The despotism of France admits but one language. But England is undoubtedly able to continue the war for twenty or even a hundred years, if the disease of Jacobinism does not enfeeble her. She may monopolize the *commerce*, not the navigation, of the two Indies, the United States, and a part of Europe; she may supply all these, and will supply even France with manufactures, and the consumers will pay the increased cost. If England will persevere, she will save Europe and save us; but, if she yields, all may be lost. I am sure she can, and I think she will persevere, because it becomes more and more manifest that she is contending for existence with a foe that can never be appeased or trusted. If it were possible to work up the French to such a frenzy as to attempt an invasion of England, I think all the friends of virtue and order in the world ought to be willing to trust the event, because there can be no case supposed in which a trial by force would be so much to the disadvantage of France. I have often wished the attempt might be made with half a million of men determined to conquer or perish, as I fully believe they would perish, and with them the physical force and the destructive fame of Jacobinism. But France, always ready to do the wickedest things that can be proposed, rarely is guilty of weak ones. She will never attempt to invade England without first seeing the British fleet vanquished.

Your sincere and affectionate friend, G. CABOT.

27th.

Postscript. — My son has just brought in the President's message,[1] which I fully approve, and hope he will tell the whole story at the first suitable moment.

[1] That in which Mr. Adams announced the results of the French mission.

Cabot to Wolcott.

Brookline, April 21,[1] 1798.

My dear Sir, — I have received your several favors to the 14th inclusively, with their enclosures; and I rejoice to find that by the last you were not destitute of hope that the spirit of the country might rise in opposition to tyrannical France.

I took the *first moment* of going to town to ascertain the fact whether the apathy, which has so long disgraced and so much endangered us, still continued. I found Mr. Higginson with an address in his hand of a good complexion; and before I left town, which was in a few hours, adequate measures were taken to obtain the most extensive subscriptions, and to invite the co-operation and concurrence of the whole people of the State.

My expectations are strong that the business will prosper, and that the body of the people will be brought to a good temperament, so that the measures of government will be zealously supported by a majority, and duly acquiesced in by all. I doubt, however, whether the mercury in the popular body will rise sufficiently to press upon the Legislature. I hope, therefore, that Congress will proceed rapidly to establish every thing requisite for our national defence. If more taxes are wanted, let them be laid without fear; but let great care be taken to show that they are unavoidable, and that we are called to part with a little, as the only possible means of saving the remainder, and with it our liberty and independence. If this could be done in an address from the Legislature, I would answer for its complete success; but, if this is unattainable, it must come from some other source. We keep our presses going with Harper's[2] excellent speech and pamphlet; and, if no address from government or any branch is practicable, Harper must devote himself to the work of proving to the people the absolute propriety of what is done. He has the requisite talents and motive, and *must* work: indeed, if he knew the extent of his fame already acquired, his ambition would stimulate him to the most laborious

[1] On April 3d, the famous X. Y. Z. letters had been sent to the House. Hence, the more confident the tone of this letter, and the account given of public demonstrations, &c.

[2] Robert Goodloe Harper, of Maryland. The speech here referred to was that made in reply to Giles (see Annals of Congress, 1797–99, II. 1341, 1353), in the debate on the Spriggs Resolutions, introduced by the

undertakings. But any majority that can pass a law must be able to pass an address to explain its expediency, and to prevent the mischievous effects of misrepresentation. I lay great stress on this idea, from a conviction of its utility, if wisely and ably pursued. As the President may be called frequently to answer addresses, I take it for granted he will profit by every such occasion, to convey to the people those truths which they ought to know and those sentiments they ought to feel. Perhaps you have seen that the little town in which I live has petitioned against arming. Our whole number of voters is about sixty-five, and upwards of fifty attended the meeting. Although I am extremely averse to moving in politics, yet my conscience would not permit me to see the government abandoned. I therefore entered into the debate, which continued several hours; and finally the vote for petitioning obtained thirty-five to twenty-three. I have the satisfaction, however, to believe that some salutary truths were inculcated, and that many of the petitioners are substantial friends of the government. I think it must be satisfactory to the executive to know that, with all the aberrations of the public mind, it has constantly approved the administration of that branch of government, even while the absurd hope was cherished that France would be conciliated. A few violent Jacobins have alone rejected this opinion; but the despatches have silenced them, and convinced many of their followers that they are wrong.

I am fearful our envoys will remain in France until the despatches are known there. In that case, they must give up their lives, or contradict their own communications, or, according to the order of the day, pay a deal of money. Should they suffer in any way, they will enjoy the sympathy of every good man in the world; and their sufferings will serve their country by dispelling a part of the remaining delusions.

Your affectionate and faithful friend,

G. CABOT.

Democrats after the receipt of the message announcing the failure of the French mission. The pamphlet by Harper was entitled "Observations on the Dispute between the United States and France." It was a very able production, and had great celebrity as well as great effect at the time of its publication.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, May 5, 1798.

SIR, — The President of the United States being desirous of availing the public of your services as Secretary of the Navy of the United States, I have now the honor of enclosing the commission, and of expressing the sentiments of respect with which I am, sir, your most obedient servant, TIMOTHY PICKERING.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

PHILADELPHIA, May 5, 1798.

SIR, — I cannot transmit your commission, without expressing my individual wishes that you would accept the office of Secretary of the Navy of the United States. I know at the same time that you cannot accept it without making some sacrifices; but our present situation demands this as a duty from every citizen, and especially from those who are eminently qualified to contribute to the safety and prosperity of our country. In this new office, the President wishes to find not only a person of practical knowledge in maritime affairs, but a statesman; and how seldom can these two characters be found combined in one person? In every character, public and private, you know how happy those of us whom you are already acquainted with would be made by your acceptance of the office. The public advantages to be derived from your conducting the department you can fully estimate, and your friends have anticipated. Although the formation of a navy has been contemplated these four years, it is at the present moment only that the establishment may be considered as commencing, and it is of vast importance that the foundation be well laid, — that the first institutions and regulations be adjusted in the best manner to its present most efficient use and future prospering. I will suggest but one other consideration. If you decline taking the office, where will your country find a substitute? There is not one in Philadelphia, and you will readily believe there is no one southward of it; and, if you fix your eye on any one at the eastward, will you propose to yourself these questions: "Can he relinquish his private affairs more conveniently than I? Can he accept the office without making greater sacrifices than I must make? In a word, is it the duty of any citizen more than mine to perform this indispensable public service?"

When President Washington tendered to me the office I now hold, I made objections. (I believe that I have mentioned the circumstances to you.) He urged my acceptance, among other reasons, in the prospect of peace in Europe, and the lessened burthens and embarrassments in executing the office. This, unfortunately, has proved an unfounded expectation. I have for some time past reflected seriously on the vast importance of employing the best abilities and energies of the country in the management of our public affairs; and therefore, without difficulty, resolved to make room for another to take my station, which the interests of the country required, or to return to private life, as those who can and have a right to judge should deem most eligible. This is, and will continue to be, my determination.

With the most earnest solicitude for your public services, and sincere wishes for your individual and domestic happiness,

I remain, dear sir, very truly yours,

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, May 11, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR, — By the same mail which brought me your official letter of the 5th, I received a private one to which I feel anxious to make a satisfactory reply. Although it is true that my inclinations, habits, duties, and interests all remarkably concur in confining me to private life, and although in consequence of this I have been continually growing less fit for any public station where great efficiency is required, yet such is my zeal to maintain the political institutions of our country, and thus preserve the country itself, that I should not at this moment hesitate to engage in the office to which I am invited, if I were not perfectly convinced that the service is beyond my strength.

I have seen, with a painful sympathy, the tasks which our executive officers are called to perform, and have often made the reflection that, if they were not capable of the most intense and persevering application, the public business must suffer. I have seen with pride, however, that the affairs of our executive government have been conducted with a degree of order, intelligence, and steadiness that do great honor to the nation; but I must be allowed to say that I am incapable of imitating those efforts which in others have been productive of so much good. This is a cir-

cumstance so important that, in my estimation, it greatly outweighs the advantage of any practical knowledge which a person could be supposed to bring into the office. It is undoubtedly requisite that the officer at the head of the naval department should possess considerable knowledge of maritime affairs; but this should be elementary as well as practical, including the principles of naval architecture and naval tactics. He should also possess skill sufficient to arrange systematically the means of equipping, manning, and conducting the naval force with the greatest possible despatch and with the least possible expense; and, above all, he should possess the inestimable secret of rendering it invincible by any equal force. Thus a knowledge of the human heart will constitute an essential ingredient in the character of this officer, that he may be able to convert every incident to the elevation of the spirit of American seamen. Suffer me to ask how a man who has led a life of indolence for twenty years can be rendered capable of these various exertions? In the present case, it is physically impossible. Notwithstanding the grateful sensations which are excited by so flattering a testimony of the national confidence, yet I think I do not deceive myself in saying that I had rather not have been thought fit for this office, than be justly chargeable with refusing at this time any essential service which I ought to perform. Let me therefore repeat that, waiving all other objections, *it is an insuperable one* that my powers are inadequate to the work. To be obliged to offer apologies, however, just when substantial aid is demanded by the government, would of itself have given me great pain, but this is exceedingly increased by the consideration that I must disappoint those to whose friendly sentiments I am always indebted, and whose esteem I cannot part with without the greatest regret.

In reply to your questions, I would say it is not to be expected that a man will be found possessing the ability to perform, at once, all the duties of an office new and difficult. But I trust men may be found, and it seems to me indispensable that such should be found, who will, by industrious application of genius and talents, soon acquire the requisite qualifications. I well know many of the circumstances respecting your appointment to the department of state, and I feel myself at liberty to insist upon the example to show that a man who has been accustomed to apply his powers properly to a few things becomes capable of every thing.

The power or habit of intense and persevering application is, in my opinion, one of the most rare and the most valuable of human talents. In great affairs, nothing can be well done without it; and, with it, men of a certain force of mind and character can do every thing, and do every thing well. A man possessing this faculty is the man now wanted. It is a faculty, however, of which I am remarkably destitute; and your candor must admit the fact. I urge it in sincerity, as an abundant justification in declining the momentous and difficult trust with which it was proposed I should be honored. Under one cover with this, I enclose an answer to your official letter, *which I pray may be considered as decisive and unequivocal.* I can never sufficiently express my gratitude for the sentiments of your private letter, and I must ask forgiveness for writing so much concerning myself. Accept my unfeigned wishes for your happiness, and believe me ever

Your faithful and obliged friend, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, June 9, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR, — When those who have a right to command our services condescend to solicit them, it is not to be imagined that a refusal, *however proper*, can be wholly forgiven. I know too much of human nature to deceive myself with the belief that I can escape censure under circumstances where others would incur it. I therefore have made up my account for the frowns of my friends, as evils that must be borne. Still, however, I calculate on a good residuum of esteem and regard with those I love best, and with this I must be content.[1]

I have been impatient to express to you my satisfaction at the great success of the President in awakening the country from the fatal stupor into which it had sunk. We have still some disaffected, seditious people in this quarter: they are few, however, in number, and reside chiefly in the town and vicinity of Boston; and their influence is extremely diminished. All men whose opinions I know are *unbounded* in their applause of the manly, just, spirited, and *instructive* sentiments expressed by the President, in his answers to the addresses. I am persuaded the good effects of these open declarations cannot be overrated. They have

[1] This refers, of course, to the subject of the two preceding letters, the secretaryship of the navy.

excited right feelings everywhere, and have silenced clamor. But Cæsar's maxim must be observed, and nothing be left undone by the government: the stronger and more decisive measures they take, the more readily will they be supported. I was glad to see the bill for prohibiting intercourse with the dominions of France; but I should have thought the prohibition should lie on all foreigners as well as citizens and residents. Otherwise, I foresee attempts will be made by our own people to change their bottoms in the neutral islands, and then supply the French; and I think it is an object of importance to prevent the supply of Guadaloupe and Hispaniola. You have passed the Rubicon: rapid marches are necessary to success, and at least they inspirit your troops. Why should not a bill pass, authorizing the executive to send away the French consuls, &c.? If you mean to take no measures but such as are purely defensive and fair retaliations, yet this *authority* should be given. The refusal to receive our ministers would certainly justify our refusal to permit consuls to act, although they admit our consuls; but, if squeamishness doubts this, we ought to be prepared to send away their consuls, when any exigency in the opinion of the executive shall require it.

I do not see that the executive is authorized to accept of voluntary naval aid which may be offered. I should have thought it wise to give commissions to such private vessels as the President should approve, and which might be obligated to convoy others. If privateers from the French islands continue numerous, the merchants may be glad to associate occasionally in forming little armaments for the protection of their vessels in a single voyage. I think, however, these aids ought not to be resorted to, until the government has done its own duty; and I hope, before Congress rises, General Smith[1] will be disposed to increase the number of vessels to be equipped by the public for the protection of commerce. It ought to be remembered that this kind of force will be inestimably precious, if an attempt to invade us should be made. The men who will have been trained in the public sea service will be able to do more than any equal number of any other description, and they will be in readiness to act.

It is pretty certain that, if Great Britain yields, we shall have the weight of the whole European world to oppress us. This seems to be understood, and men are momently declaring their belief that we can and shall sustain it all without sinking. Doubt-

[1] Samuel Smith, at this time member of Congress from Maryland.

less, if we were united and determined to die rather than submit, we should succeed; but the cursed foul contagion of French principles has infected us, and time is required to restore us to soundness.

My hope is that France will exert all her powers in an attempt upon England. If she fails, the world will be free. I have the highest confidence in the success of England in such a contest. Her chance would be much better than in a long protracted war of such immense expense, and which gives room for so many contingencies. But I cannot believe that the French will trust themselves on the sea. With all their victories on land, they are no match for the English on the sea, and I should expect the French to be defeated even with a superiority of naval force of three to two; nor do I think, if they could land in England, that they would be able to conquer it. I therefore wish the cause of the civilized world to be tried there. I see no other chance so favorable.

Although you are doubtless better informed than I am, yet it may not be amiss to mention that my letters from London[1] of the 9th April state to me confidentially that Pinckney and Marshall are to be turned away, and Gerry kept, *if possible*. It seems the delay of the envoys has been produced by the *extreme fastidiousness* of one of the gentlemen. I don't believe, however, he will be such a dupe as to remain after his colleagues shall depart. Perhaps the case will not occur, for it is highly probable that the despatches which have been published will arrive in France before any of them can have embarked. A gentleman who left France the last of March tells me that no idea was entertained there that we should offer any resistance. The Gallo-Americans had no doubt we should pay money, and he says they will be all surprised at learning that we dare to refuse the demands of France.

Will you allow me to suggest the propriety of selecting *young* men for the lieutenants and sailing-masters in the navy? Old sailors are incapable of improvement, and young ones may be made whatever you wish. I deem it a misfortune that any but young men should have employments now which will lead to important commands in a few years.

Yours faithfully, G. CABOT.

[1] Besides occasional letters from Mr. Gore, Mr. Cabot also received letters from his younger brother, Mr. Samuel Cabot, then in London, as agent of the American commission under the Jay treaty.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

(*Confidential.*)

TRENTON, Sept. 20, 1798.

DEAR SIR, — You have seen, and I trust approved, the order in which the names of Hamilton, Pinckney, and Knox were arranged for general officers. Nobody at the seat of government doubted whether they would rank in that way, being that in which they were nominated and approved by the Senate. But you must have noticed that, two or three times in the "Centinel," the idea was suggested that General Knox was the first major-general. At length it has appeared that General Knox demanded the first rank. The first intimation of it to me was in his answer to a letter which I wrote him at the request of the late Captain Mitchell, who wished to be his aide-de-camp. I was astonished at the claim. I knew indeed that Knox was proud and vain and ambitious; but I thought that as for years he had been the daily witness of Hamilton's vast superiority of talents, and had known how highly they stood in the public estimation, and supposing also that he felt an ardent friendship for Hamilton, I was astonished to find him not hesitating, but apparently desirous not to serve under Hamilton. The President's tour to Massachusetts furnished Knox with the lucky opportunity of making and enforcing his claim by the plausibility of his arguments and his adulatory professions of respect, honor, and devotion to the great man. You probably know that Knox is capable of using the deepest flattery; and flattery has often too much effect on the finest minds, and in the present instance would make the stronger impression as operating against a competitor for whom the President had no liking, if he did not feel for him aversion. In a letter to the President, marked private, but which is filed in the war office, dated June 26, he[1] thus begins: "I have often intended, in the ardor of my unqualified admiration of the measures of the supreme executives, to express the same respectfully to you. But hitherto I have been restrained from an apprehension of invading upon your important duties. A crisis, however, is rapidly approaching, which renders it indispensable that the mind of the meanest citizen be known as to the part he intends to act." Having then made some assertions on the nature of the impending war and the most vulnerable points to be guarded,

[1] Knox.

he says: "Whoever you should please to appoint as the immediate commanding officer of the provisional army, you will, I am persuaded, contemplate General Washington as the efficient Commander-in-Chief. His name would be a host, and the occasion would be worthy of his name. He alone would be able to combine and draw into activity and harmonize all that remains of the late army that could be useful. My diffidence in uttering these sentiments is inexpressible, and only to be equalled by my respect and attachment to you."

"After having said so much, I should lose all self-respect, were I not to say that, if there be any sort of service to which my humble abilities should be judged equal, I should faithfully and ardently execute it, believing as I do that the occasion will demand the labors of all the friends of their country to defend its rights and liberties against the all-devouring rapacity of the French rulers." Who that reads these professions of patriotism and humility would imagine that his humility aspired, and would be content only with the rank of second in command, and that his patriotism admitted, at such a crisis, a personage of *his consequence* to withdraw from the service of his country? This imaginary importance of character, and usefulness to serve in a station which to all who know him must seem abundantly equal to his talents, would hardly be worth a thought, were not the President inclined to favor his pretensions. Knox has appealed to a rule observed in the American war, in which he says it was directed that, of appointments of officers to the same rank on the same day, the priority was to be determined by the rank held prior to the new appointment; consequently, as he was a major-general and Hamilton only a lieutenant-colonel, the latter must now take the subordinate station. But there can be no such *general* rule; at least, none is found in the journals of Congress. The only one to which he can refer is that of Nov. 24, 1778. But that you will see is absolutely confined to the officers appointed in pursuance of the resolves, Sept. 16, 1776, and prior to the 1st of January, 1777. If, however, the *old* regulations are to govern, and it is upon Knox's representation of their force to the President that the latter has said he thinks Knox has a "legal" right to rank before Hamilton, we appeal to a resolve which is directly in point, and general in its nature. This is that of the 4th of January, 1776, in these words: "In all elections of officers by Congress, where

more than one are elected on the same day to commands of the same rank, they shall take rank of each other *according to their election, and the entry of their names in the minutes*, and their commissions shall be numbered to show their priority." This is an obvious rule, perfectly just in principle, and ought to decide the present question, for it was to regulate the relative rank of *new officers*. And such are Hamilton and Knox, who, prior to their late appointments, were *private citizens*, without other claims to office or rank than agreeably to their positive and relative talents and merit. If Knox has a *legal* right to precede Hamilton, then Hand, who was a brigadier in the American war, will precede Pinckney, Hamilton, and Lee, the first having been only a colonel, and the two last lieutenant-colonels; and then, too, General White must precede Dayton; and the practice must run through the whole train of old officers who shall be called to serve in the *new army*. General Washington's opinion appears by the arrangement of their names in the list he gave in his own handwriting to the Secretary of War, who laid it before the President, *who had requested General Washington's opinions* on the officers proper to be called into service, in the principal stations. But, besides this, General Washington wrote a letter to Hamilton, left it open for the Secretary of War to take a copy, and the latter laid the original before the President. In that letter, General Washington says explicitly to Hamilton: "You will see that as to my old friend, General Knox, whom I love and esteem, I have ranked him below you both,"— that is, below both Hamilton and Pinckney, between whom alone there arose any hesitation in General Washington's mind, and that chiefly from local considerations: the high respect borne for General Pinckney in the Southern States; his great popularity, added to his being really a soldier; and the probability that the Southern States would be the theatre of war, and where, consequently, the great popularity of General Pinckney, and the extensive influence of his connections, would render his services, in an acceptable station, of immense importance.

I have much more of detail to give you, but fear I shall miss the mail. The object of this letter is to engage you in this matter in such way as you and one or two confidential friends (say Higginson and Ames) shall deem most eligible to prevail on the President to acquiesce in the first arrangement,— Hamilton, Pinckney, Knox. The affair has been fully and handsomely stated in a private letter

from Mr. Wolcott to the President: the arguments are irrefragable, and ought to be irresistible. But the President has committed himself so far, it will be difficult to retreat; and yet his own honor, reputation, and influence we all think involved in it, and therewith the public welfare. Hamilton will not serve, if superseded by Knox. Yet this is a fact which it may not be expedient to communicate to the President, for he personally dislikes Hamilton, and may in this way be willing to get rid of him. For the President does not estimate his abilities as all other public men do: nay, he thinks the public voice prefers Knox, and that the "Five New England States will not submit to the humiliation intended for them," — that is, in placing Hamilton above Knox! How egregiously the President is misinformed! The mail is ready to close, and I must quit abruptly. Pray contrive some means of preventing so serious a mistake as is here presented to your view. If Knox could be persuaded that the voice of the country, even of New England, requires Hamilton to be placed second to General Washington, and that the old rules will not legally apply to the present case, — and that, if they do, they are decidedly in favor of Hamilton, — *perhaps* he may be induced to *withdraw* his claim. This might yet save his own reputation, while it would relieve the President from extreme embarrassment.

The nature of this communication is delicate, and I commit it to your perfect confidence.

Very sincerely yours, TIMOTHY PICKERING.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

(*Private.*)

BROOKLINE, Mass., Sept. 27, 1798.

DEAR SIR. — Your confidential communication of the 20th was received last evening, and shall be attended to without delay.

The order of the appointments, being supposed to have established the rank, was very highly approved here by those whose solicitude for the public welfare is sincere. It soon appeared, however, that another sort of men were active in encouraging the discontents which Knox might be likely to feel. I think, however, an acquiescence would have soon taken place, if General Lincoln[1] had

[1] General Benjamin Lincoln, distinguished in the war of Independence.

not countenanced Knox's pretensions in a manner more decided than is usual for him to act in any political affairs. The principal reason for this extraordinary conduct is probably to be found in the peculiar circumstances of General Lincoln, who is an indorser of Knox's notes, which are floating in this quarter to a very great amount.

My first impression on reading your letter is that I ought to write a letter to the President, stating the course of public opinion here as it has appeared to me.

If this idea should be pursued, I will transmit you a copy of what I shall write him.

Mr. Higginson, who is with me, thinks of nothing better at present; and I shall call Ames to co-operate with us either by taking a similar step, or by making a visit for the purpose.

I am, dear sir,

Your faithful friend, GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO JOHN ADAMS.

(*Private.*)

BROOKLINE, Sept. 29, 1798.

DEAR SIR, — A sincere desire to prevent a possible embarrassment to the administration of our government, and to see preserved entire that influence by which alone the honor and independence of our nation can be maintained, has induced me to trouble you with my thoughts at this time.

When the appointments of major-generals were first known, it was readily perceived that the order in which they were made naturally determined their rank; and it was seen with infinite satisfaction, by the most zealous friends of our country, that the actual arrangement was in the highest degree propitious to the security and welfare of the United States.

Among the many respectable persons whose opinions were early disclosed to me, there was not one who did not applaud the executive for having happily united in the military service the greatest weight of character with the greatest powers of genius and talents, in a manner perfectly adapted to the present exigency and to future contingencies. But this excellent disposition, so much approved by one sort of men, could not please men of another sort, who eagerly seized an opportunity to disturb it by suggesting that General

Knox would be disgraced, if he served in a station subordinate to Colonel Hamilton. Few men who possess a common portion of vanity or ambition are able to resist an attack of this kind; and yet I believe that General Knox's own consciousness of the vast superiority of his rival, co-operating with a natural good temper, would have produced his final acquiescence, if he had been left wholly to himself. But he was not: on the contrary, he was stimulated to declare his discontents, which he did pretty soon in whispers among his friends. Even here he might have stopped, if he had been countenanced only by those who reprobate all the measures of the executive; but he soon found himself supported by General Lincoln in a manner more decisive than is usual for him of late years to support any political opinions.

The feelings of General Knox are so natural, that, if they do not justify his conduct, they at least explain it; but I confess all my own reflections leave me at some loss for the motives of General Lincoln. It was at first insisted on that as General Knox could not, consistently with his honor, serve in a station below Colonel Hamilton, it must be presumed that the appointments were not made in the order they appeared: but, the fact being ascertained, it was then contended that the priority of order gave no priority of rank in appointments made on the same day.

This doctrine, I believe, is new, both at the seat of government and here, and it would seem to me, if it were admitted, would have the absurd effect of destroying all claims to priority of rank among persons appointed on the same day, and who had not been officers before.

I do not recollect ever to have heard it denied until now that the priority in the order of appointments on the same day settled the rank as decisively as a priority of years.

Such were the ideas which prevailed in the Senate at the time of the naval appointments in 1794, and such they continue; for I am informed that in the late session the question was started, and the concurrence of the Senate with the nominations of all the major-generals, except that of Colonel Hamilton, would have been postponed for a day to prevent doubts as to his rank: but that the perfect conviction of his rank being secured by a prior nomination by the President, and a prior concurrence of the Senate, rendered the postponement unnecessary. But it is said there is a rule which governs in this case, and which was established in our Revolutionary war.

There is, I am told, a resolve which declares that, in elections made on the same day of officers to the same rank, the priority shall be determined by the rank held previous to the elections. This was, I believe, a *special provision* for a *particular* description of persons designated by the resolve. There is, however, another resolve which is *general*, and which provides, according to what seems reasonable, without any positive rule, that in elections on the same day the rank shall follow in the order of the elections; therefore, if either of these obsolete resolves be applicable, which at best is doubtful, it would seem natural to take the latter, which is *general*, and was intended for all new officers, as all those must be considered who are private citizens and out of all office at the time of appointment.

I recollect there were some occasions in which pains were taken to accommodate the pretensions of gentlemen founded on these antiquated titles, but I think they were always treated as mere matters of discretion, and never admitted as rightful claims; and I am sorry to add that, in my opinion, the attention which has been given them in many instances has been very prejudicial to the public service.

And I do not see, if the opinions of Generals Lincoln and Knox are correct, why other officers of the former army now employed must not be elevated above Pinckney, Hamilton, and Lee, and thus the whole line of new appointments be deranged and broken up; an evil which I think the country would deplore as great in the extreme. I would not venture to say what is the opinion of the most enlightened men through New England, concerning the character of every individual of the major-generals; but, on the comparative merits and talents of Hamilton and Knox, I am well persuaded there is a remarkable uniformity of sentiment in favor of the former. It has been intimated to me repeatedly that General Knox's friends cherished a hope that the President would listen to his demands, and might be persuaded to favor them. If there is an expectation of this kind, I have presumed it might be useful to be apprised of it, and I indulge the belief that my motives for offering this notice will be so justly appreciated as to render an apology unnecessary.

I am, sir, with every sentiment of unfeigned respect and attachment, Your most obedient and faithful servant,

GEORGE CABOT.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

Cabot to Wolcott.

(*Private.*)

Brookline, Oct. 6, 1798.

My dear Sir, — I have just written to Mr. Pickering a short letter, in which I have suggested a method by which all embarrassment resulting from the question of rank may *possibly* be prevented. General Knox has said that he could acquiesce in the arrangement made, if General Pinckney could. Now, as I am satisfied the arrangement is in all respects proper, I presume Pinckney will not countenance the objection made by Knox; and therefore, even if Pinckney for other reasons should decline the service, he may so manage as to dissipate the doubts excited by Knox's friends.

We are all solicitous to see what course Gerry intends to steer, that we may shape our own accordingly. The gross impropriety and folly of his conduct in France makes it difficult for him to act a right part here, even if he is well disposed. He has divided the delegation, as if to show that it represented a divided country; he has held secret conferences with the French government, to which his colleagues had a *right* to be privy, and his engagement that they should not was contrary to duty; he has acted conformably to the French maxim, that there might be an adjustment of differences and an establishment of fraternity with *us*, by sacrificing our government and disavowing the principles and policy of its administration. It would seem, therefore, as if he must say now that peace and safety were attainable, if our government had not prevented it by precipitating measures of hostility.

I hope, however, he will say nothing of this kind; and it is said his language is approbatory of the administration. A few days more will disclose to us his determination. I wish the President knew precisely how Gerry is, and will be, viewed by the friends of government; but your own recollection of what passed at your table[1] must suggest the delicacy I feel towards him on this

[1] In a letter to his wife, dated June 21, 1795, Mr. Adams says: "I dined yesterday at Mr. Wolcott's, the Secretary of the Treasury, with King, Ellsworth, and Cabot, and a few others. The conversation turned upon old times. One of the company expressed such inveteracy against my old friend Gerry that I could not help taking up his vindication. The future election of a governor, in case of an empty chair, excites a jealousy which I have long perceived. These things will always be so. Gerry's merit is inferior to that of no man in Massachusetts, except the present governor,

account, you cannot have forgotten the warmth with which I insisted on his unfitness for all great affairs. The experience which has been had of the justness of my opinion would make a recognition of it extremely painful. It is unfortunate that Congress did not declare war: the danger of French artifice would then have been less. It is impossible to make the people feel or see distinctly that we have much more to fear from peace than war: that peace cannot be real, and only leaves open a door by which the enemy enters; and that war would shut him out; that the French are wolves in sheep's clothing, entreating to be received as friends, that they may be enabled to destroy and devour. But war open and declared would not only deprive our external enemy of his best hopes, but would also extinguish the hopes of internal foes. The rights and duties of every citizen in a state of war would be known and regarded.

Traitors and sedition-mongers, who are now protected and tolerated, would then be easily restrained or punished. I hope therefore we shall not long persist in *pacific war*, with one part of our citizens against us and another part neutral. At this moment, it appears to me every thing depends on the approaching elections: if they issue *favorably*, the hands of the country need be bound no longer; and, *in that case*, I think the executive can do every thing. For, if the present Congress at the next session refuses to do any thing which national safety requires, the executive *ought* to summon the new Congress on the 5th of March, and ought to say that the new elected representative body, just constituted by the people, must be well qualified to declare their will; and, as from the numerous addresses from every part of the Union the people seem to be strongly impressed with the reality of the dangers of

according to my ideas and judgment of merit. I wish he was more enlarged, however, and more correct in his views. He never was one of the threads tied into the Essex knot, and was never popular with that set."

The discussion apparently was sharp; and "one of the company" — Mr. Cabot, as appears from the letter given above — remembered it well, and felt a delicacy in speaking again to Mr. Adams on the subject. Mr. Adams stood alone in his admiration for Gerry, and was apparently very sensitive to any allusions to him. (See Works of Pickering, III. 441.) Mr. Adams attributed the general low opinion of Gerry's talents to the Essex Federalists; and this deepened his feelings on this point, as on every other which concerned the natives of that county. Indeed, the hostility of the "Essex Junto" to Gerry seems to have been his strongest claim for Mr. Adams's affection and admiration.

the country, they ought to have the earliest opportunity of taking such measures as they think indispensable to the security of the United States, and which have not appeared so to one branch of the present legislature. A proclamation, well formed on this principle, addressed to the new House, would give them a strong and right impulse, and, I have no doubt, would be strengthened by the spirit of the people. The new Congress, meeting under such impressions, could act with vigor and decision; and we should no longer doubt whether our representatives were Frenchmen or Americans. Farewell. G. CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

(*Private.*)

BROOKLINE, Oct. 6, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR, — I sent by the post some days ago the letter I promised you I would write to the President. Mr. Higginson and Mr. Ames approved it; and I have, by their advice, sent a copy of it, together with yours, to Mr. Goodhue, accompanied with a request that he would make a visit to Quincy, to enforce the ideas of mischief which we all entertain from any attempt to derange the order of general officers which now is established. When I get my copy back from Mr. Goodhue, it shall be transmitted to you, that you may see precisely what it is. General Knox is now in Maine, but will be at Boston, probably, in a week or ten days. If I can contrive to satisfy him that he must be a loser if he pursues the game which he is playing, I shall certainly do it; but, *at present*, I think of no person here who can tell him all he ought to know in a manner that would be well received. Colonel Wadsworth,[1] of Hartford, could manage the business perfectly well, if he were applied to for the purpose by Mr. Wolcott, and could afterwards see Knox.

Colonel Wadsworth has been in the habits of friendship and intimacy with Knox for many years, and has been accustomed to tell him of his faults with great freedom; and has, I believe, in some instances really served him by doing it. For my own part, I should never *wish* to be so employed; but, in a case where great good might be expected from it, no man ought to decline it.

A few days since, I gave a little dinner to Mr. Liston's[2] family,

[1] See above, p. 91.

[2] The British minister.

including Mr. Jeffrey, his host; and knowing, as I did, that the doctrines of General Knox on the subject of rank had been vehemently insisted on at Jeffrey's table, by Dr. Eustis,[1] Morton, and others, I purposely introduced the subject, and pronounced my opinion very emphatically, that Knox would be ultimately injured by suffering himself to be pushed forward in the manner he did. I urged that the rank was now legally settled, according to usage as well as reason; and that, by denying it, the preference of Colonel Hamilton would become so apparent as to injure Knox both in his feelings and reputation.

In the course of the discussion, an appeal was made to Mr. Liston and Lord Henry Stuart, both of whom declared that, in England, if an officer were once out of commission, *from any cause*, his old rank would be lost, if he came into service again; and that he must regularly go through all the grades which any one would, who had never been commissioned.

The result of our whole conversation was a unanimity of sentiment that our government was right in its arrangement, and that no question could properly be raised concerning the rank. I have been told that Knox latterly said he would serve, if General Pinckney did, and not otherwise. If, therefore, General Pinckney should feel no such motives for refusing as operate here, the whole difficulty may be avoided; for, if Pinckney refuses to serve from *any other motive*, and will so manage as to demonstrate his own acquiescence in the rank, Knox may be perfectly saved on his own terms.

Mr. Gerry is at length returned, and, I am told, passed some time yesterday at Quincy.

I am not well informed yet of the course he steers. The half-way men say he condemns the French bitterly, and recommends to our people union and vigor; and, it is said, he declared to E. Robbins (the speaker of our House of Representatives) that he highly approved of the spirited measures of our government.

On the other hand, I am informed *credibly* that, since he left France, he has maintained strenuously the ridiculous and dangerous opinion that peace might have been preserved, if our government had not proceeded so far in the measures of hostility.

With unfeigned esteem and affection,

I remain your assured friend, G. CABOT.

[1] See above, p. 82.

Cabot to Pickering.

Brookline, Oct. 12, 1798.

My dear Sir, — I have the pleasure to enclose you a copy of what I wrote to the President, in obedience to your commands. Although what I have written will do little more than confirm the idea of what the public sentiment must be, yet I cannot think more is necessary in this case; but every day convinces me of the impropriety of the local separation of the President from the heads of departments. I fear that, at this moment, the desire to palliate Mr. Gerry's errors influences the President to speak of *all* the envoys as having conducted equally *well* and equally *ill*. This is not true, and, if persisted in, will justly offend those who have done their duty, and all their friends. I pray you to accept my best regards and invariable esteem. G. Cabot.

Cabot to Wolcott.

(*Confidential.*)

Oct. 16, 1798.

Dear Sir, — Every day brings some new proof of the necessity there is for some person to inform the President of the danger to which he exposes the government and himself, by attempting to vindicate Mr. Gerry at the expense of his colleagues. I have just been canvassing the subject with Mr. Higginson and Mr. Sewall [1] at Boston. We are all aware of the schisms among the friends of government, which may be apprehended; and we concluded to urge Otis to make a visit to Quincy, for the purpose of communicating freely to the President what passes abroad on this subject, and how much his *frankness* exposes him and his friends. Sewall offers to accompany Otis, if required; but his known dislike of Gerry makes it best that he should not be a principal. You recollect enough of what passed at your own table to perceive that I am disqualified to speak of Mr. Gerry to the President. But, my dear sir, must there not be something more done? Must it not become a maxim, never to be violated, that the President shall be always accompanied by those whom he has selected to assist him in carrying on the executive government? If, at any time, he is absent for the benefit of relaxation, let it be adhered to that he does no business, and gives no opinions. If some system

[1] See above, p. 113.

like this is not established, there will be no order nor consistency in our affairs. It is a delicate thing to say all this in plain terms; but it is so fit and proper, indeed so indispensable to the public, and to the ease as well as honor of the President, that you must cause it to be well understood.

We are grieved to see the Maryland elections turn out so ill. The spirit of French democracy is as active as it is wicked, and thus becomes more than a match for every other sort of spirit. We had been flattering ourselves that in this State we should have no more Jacobin votes after the present Congress; but Isaac Parker [1] will decline, and will be succeeded by Dearborn.[2] Varnum [3] is more likely to be chosen than not, and Freeman [4] may be elected merely because no good Federalist will consent to be a candidate in his district. G. C.

Pickering to Cabot.

Trenton, Oct. 20, 1798.

Dear Sir, — I have this morning read Colonel Hamilton's letter of the 19th instant to the Secretary of War, in which is the following passage. Having mentioned the arrival of General Pinckney, he says: —

"You will learn with pleasure that he sent me a message by young Rutledge, purporting his entire satisfaction with the military arrangements, and readiness to serve under my command. Communicate this to our friends Pickering and Wolcott, as I am not well enough to write them by this post."

This, according to an intimation in your letter to me, will settle the matter with Knox. But his conduct has been such in this affair as cannot fail to have displeased his old patron and former friend, General Washington; and I doubt whether there will exist

[1] Afterwards a judge of the Supreme Court, and chief justice of Massachusetts.

[2] General Henry Dearborn. Afterwards in Mr. Jefferson's cabinet, and prominent in the war of 1812.

[3] Joseph Bradley Varnum, general in the Revolutionary army; for many years a leading Democrat; member of Congress from Massachusetts, and Speaker of the House in the tenth and eleventh Congresses.

[4] I presume this refers to Dr. Nathaniel Freeman, a local politician of some prominence in the Plymouth district, and judge of the Court of Common Pleas. He was never a member of Congress.

again that perfect cordiality between them, or between Hamilton and Knox. The latter, however, must feel himself so much in the wrong that it may produce a modest demeanor, and restore him to their friendship: it may do him good to have been a little troubled.

I received this morning a letter from Mr. King, a letter in which is the following passage: "Notwithstanding his pretended delicacy, Hauteval[1] by no means denies the agency ascribed to him in soliciting the bribe required by Talleyrand. Colonel Trumbull, who was at Paris soon after the arrival there of the commissioners, has more than once informed me that Hauteval told him that both the *douceur* and the loan were indispensable, and urged him to employ his influence with the American commissioners to offer the bribe as well as the loan." Delicate [*word illegible in MS.*] when deciphering the despatches, I voluntarily spared his name, because the envoys mentioned it with respect, for secrecy was enjoined only with regard to X. and Y.

Pray write me from time to time of Gerry's deportment, and contrive to have his derelictions minuted for future use.

I am, with sincere affection,

Yours, T. PICKERING.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

(*Confidential.*)

BROOKLINE, Oct. 26, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have received your favor of the 15th, and am happy to find that the business which gave rise to our present correspondence is likely to end so well. General Knox has lately been summoned to Boston by urgent and anxious creditors. He does *not* now pay his notes, and General Lincoln's property is attached. How many painful reflections arise from these incidents? Who does not see that the manners of our country are daily unfitting us for a mild elective government? If our great men must be guarded by sheriffs, those sheriffs must be sufficiently strong to keep them.

Mr. Gerry is very copious in declarations of loyalty. He says all must unite with the government, and even those who do not approve every measure are, nevertheless, bound to support them. He is also liberal in his condemnation of the French government;

[1] One of Talleyrand's agents in demanding bribes from the American envoys, better known by the letter Z. in the X. Y. Z. despatches.

but he still maintains (*as he always must*) that an adjustment might have been made, &c. Our good people all censure Mr. Marshall for his opinions of the Sedition Act. I have examined what he has said, and have moderated the blame they incur as well as I could. I also desired a young friend to write the vindication you saw in Wednesday's "Centinel."

The President's answer to the Machias address has attracted some attention, from the disposition it manifests to merge the great errors of a very little man with the little errors (if any can be found) of great and good men. This may become the source of serious disquietude among the friends of government. I have taken some pains to arrest its progress, but with little success hitherto. I hope, however, to cause it to be understood that *silence on the comparative merits of the envoys* would be proper.

I think the President will soon discover that Knox is not, and *has not been*, thought a suitable man for the second commander by the best New England men. Even in Boston, the number is small who hold him very high, and those mostly table friends or expectants of office. It is openly said he declines, which, if true, you know from the war office.

Yours, faithfully and affectionately, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, Oct. 31, 1798.

DEAR SIR, — A great deal of pains has been taken to give a wrong direction to the public sentiment on the subject of the late military appointments, but I think the circumstance of General Pinckney's acceptance of his commission, and his approbation of the arrangement, will have great influence in bringing good men to think rightly, and in silencing the clamors of the factions. I lost no time in communicating the information, and I have the satisfaction to see it producing great good.

Mr. Gerry is very zealous and unequivocal in his commendation of our government as it regards French affairs. In the presence of Judge Patterson,[1] Mr. Theophilus Parsons, and Judge Lowell[2] (as the latter himself assures me), he declared his utter

[1] William Patterson, senator from New Jersey, and at this time a judge of the Supreme Court of the United States.

[2] John Lowell, of Newburyport, an eminent lawyer, judge of the United States District Court, 1789–1801; and then chief justice of the Circuit Court for Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.

detestation of the French government, and his approbation of our own, which he thinks has conducted perfectly right; and he insists warmly that no *honest* man can withhold his full support of our government, even if its measures were not all perfectly conformable to his opinion of right. He says we have every thing to fear from the wickedness and power of France, unless we are united and act with vigor; that she will certainly practise every seduction to corrupt us, and will assuredly seize the first opportunity to divide and destroy us. If, however, we are united and firm, he thinks us perfectly safe. Such, I am told, is his language, and that he uses it freely. I will endeavor to procure from some one his precise expressions, but you already have their substance.

Mr. Marshall has given great uneasiness here by his answers to the "Freeholder;" and Gerry takes advantage of it to enforce the belief that Marshall's politics will not prove sound according to New England ideas, and he is confident "that Marshall will not in Congress act with New England men, *whom he holds in great contempt.*" I do not yet believe this. Mr. Marshall I know has much to learn on the subject of a practicable system of free government for the United States. I believe, however, he is a man of so much good sense that, with honest principles, he cannot fail to discern and pursue a right course, and therefore that he will eventually prove a great acquisition.

I mentioned in my last the report of Knox's declining to serve as third major-general: this is now confirmed; and, as he is seen with Gerry more than usual, it will not be surprising if they join stocks and make a common defence. It can never be sufficiently lamented that these men are authorized to quote the President as on their side. Without this sanction to their respective opinions, they would have found no support among the Federalists; but even with this advantage I have no doubt that they will be very generally censured. You have already been informed that Knox's paper is discredited with the names of Generals Lincoln and Jackson[1] upon it. It is believed that Knox's notes now extant exceed one hundred thousand dollars, perhaps one hundred and twenty or one hundred and thirty thousand. I am unable to say for what portion of this Lincoln is responsible, but it is thought forty or fifty thousand, which is much more than he can pay. I have so

[1] Henry Jackson, of Boston, distinguished as an officer in the war of Independence.

often seen men made desperate by pecuniary wants that I am always grieved to see men of influence reduced on account of what they may do as well as what they may suffer.

I pray you to accept my unfeigned regards, and believe me

Your faithful friend, GEORGE CABOT.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

(*Confidential.*)

TRENTON, Nov. 6, 1798.

DEAR SIR, — I have this moment received your letter of the 26th ult. I regret the embarrassments of General Knox, and the misfortunes into which they have plunged General Lincoln; but I have for some time past wished for what is now decided, that General Knox should not enter into the army. He has positively refused to accept the commission of third major-general, which was finally and solely tendered to him. How very different and how excellent the conduct of General Pinckney! As soon as he learned, on arrival, that some questions and difficulties occurred about the priority of rank among the three first named major-generals, he wrote a note to General Hamilton, explicitly informing him that with great pleasure he should serve under his command. And, on his coming to Trenton, General Pinckney told me that he was gratified in the first rank being given to General Hamilton, whose superior genius and military talents deserved it. Nay, further, before he was made acquainted with the whole history of the business, he would have given place to Knox also, if that would have removed all inquietude! Yet General Pinckney is a man of high sense of honor, of valuable military acquirements, and he has made the military much his study, and is of great influence in the Southern States, on all which might be founded a claim to an elevated rank. But he is truly a patriot and an honest man.

I took notice of the President's answer to the Machias address, and regretted the passage which involved the three envoys in the same censure. I gave General Marshall information of it, and expressed my opinion that for his and General Pinckney's reputation it would be necessary that he should write a history of their mission. He answered that, since he consented to be a candidate for a seat in Congress, such torrents of abuse had been poured upon him he feared his own testimony concerning himself would,

among his enemies and their followers, fail of meeting due credit. Added to which, his professional business was so in arrears in consequence of his absence, that he really had no time to undertake such a justification. But I suppose you know that the President tendered the commission of Judge of the Supreme Court to Marshall before it was offered to Bushrod Washington; and, in his letter to me, the President really pronounced a handsome panegyric on Marshall, and said he was the only one of the three envoys who had conducted unexceptionably. But I was not able to discern a single circumstance in General Pinckney's conduct that was reprehensible. It is true he *remained* in France three or four months longer than General Marshall; but it was to rescue his daughter from death, and he has saved her.

Yesterday I received from the President a letter dated the 26th ult., in which he says: "The enclosed letter to me from Mr. Gerry I received last night, and pray you to have it inserted in a public print. It will satisfy him, *and do no harm to any one.* It explains some circumstances advantageously." I was surprised at the expression, "*and do no harm to any one;*" for it gave the lie to me or my informer, in declaring that the "important fact" I had stated on incontrovertible evidence "never existed." The evidence was General Marshall's letter to me, whose very words I used in stating the fact, and had before sent those words to the President, who showed them to Gerry, when he first manifested his uneasiness at some expressions in my letter to P. Johnston. Upon which, Gerry gave to the President the same explanations which are contained in his letter to the President of the 20th ult., a copy of which I enclose. These explanations, you will see, are contemptible quibbles about immaterial circumstances attending the important facts to be stated and established. My sense of Gerry's letter and conduct, and of the President's prayer "to have the letter published," you will find in my answer to the President of yesterday, of which also I enclose a copy. I am sorry that want of time absolutely forbids my giving you the long detail of facts on which my accusation against Gerry for *duplicity and treachery* is founded. There is no question, in my view of them, that they prove his *betraying*, in his frequent secret conferences with Talleyrand, the opinions, propositions, and determinations of his colleagues; and Talleyrand's propositions to him were under an injunction of secrecy towards them, with which Gerry was suffi-

ciently abject, base, and treacherous in his joint trust from his country to comply.

Faithfully and affectionately yours,

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

P. S. What you say in vindication of General Marshall's answers to a "Freeholder" induces me to send you the enclosed extract of my letter to Mr. Goodhue, who, in his letter of October 26, expressed his fears that Marshall was not sound at heart.[1]

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, Nov. 7, 1798.

DEAR SIR, — I yesterday met Mr. H. G. Otis and Mr. Ed. Robbins,[2] each of whom separately had conversed freely with Mr. Gerry; and they both agreed that Mr. Gerry had unequivocally approved the proceedings of our government, and condemned that of France. Mr. Robbins stated to me that he questioned Gerry very closely, and that his answers were satisfactory. He asked in particular whether Mr. Gerry thought the measures of our government toward France were wise and proper, to which Mr. Gerry replied *that they were perfectly so in his opinion, and that their effects upon the French government proved it, for that in proportion as our tone was raised theirs was lowered.*

Mr. Otis intimated to him the state of public opinion concerning him: that the friends of government were not satisfied, and that its enemies had calculated upon finding in him a character round

[1] The passage in Mr. Goodhue's letter referred to here runs as follows: —

"We meet with ups and downs in our political prospects, and I confess nothing has given me more surprise and regret than that General Marshall should so far degrade himself as to fan the flame of opposition to government by giving his opinion so decidedly against the Alien and Sedition Bills. What does he mean? Or have we been mistaking hitherto his true character? I sometimes have been led to think that none of the Virginia Federalists are little better than half-way Jacobin." (Goodhue to Pickering, Oct. 26, 1798. The letter is misplaced chronologically, and can be found in Vol. XXVI. of the Pickering MSS.) This extract illustrates very well what I have said above (p. 147) in regard to Mr. Cabot's defence of Marshall on this occasion, and also shows the rigid and unyielding temper of the New England Federalists.

[2] See above, p. 171.

which they might rally with new spirit. He replied that he was sensible of the predicament in which he stood, but he thought it an ill compliment to his understanding to suppose he could be made subservient to the designs of the opposition. I think, from all I have heard, that there can be no doubt that Gerry professes his entire approbation of our national measures, and recommends to every one to support them; and that he insists that it is the duty of those who are not satisfied with the administration to support it nevertheless, but that for himself *he is satisfied with it.*

He told Mr. Robbins that the *mockery* of elections in France was so gross that the most ignorant were not deceived. All the people know that they have less liberty than ever, for they hardly dare to *think* freely now upon any subject that has any relation to public affairs. He mentioned examples within his own knowledge of persons returned as members of the legislature, who were refused a seat because their principles did not suit the Directory, and eight or ten electors having afterward sent other members of *the flexible kind.* This is impudently called the choice of the people. The people, however, as Mr. Gerry says, see very plainly that all this is a perfect farce, but dare not say so, lest it be converted to a tragedy.

I know, my dear friend, that you are not so prone to see objects in a gloomy light as I am; but I cannot forbear to express to you my apprehensions, which are now greater than ever, that our country is destined to act over the same follies, to practise the same vices, and of consequence to suffer the same miseries which compose the history of revolutionary France. I trust we shall fall short of them in each particular, but we shall in some considerable degree imitate their errors and their sufferings. This is a fate which cannot be wholly averted: it may, however, be procrastinated and mitigated by the exertions of good men; and these I hope will be never withheld. Our elections here indicate a state of the public mind less satisfactory than was believed. Your old friend, the doughty general, though not elected, has received a support in this district which astonishes the Federalists. But it is more grievous to observe the motives which govern the voters: they vote for the man who would vote against taxes. I recollect to have heard that Dr. Manning, of Ipswich, wishing to recommend himself to the people, boasted, toward the close of our Revolutionary war, that during the whole contest he had never

voted for a tax, although he was in the legislature many years. How long could a just, equal, and free government be maintained by a people who would approve of such a representative? I have fondly cherished the belief that our countrymen would give a fair chance to the experiment of a just government altogether elective by the people and perfectly free; but I am ready to say that, as I understand human nature, *such a system cannot long be supported by any people whatever.* In every government where any thing like justice is respected, there will necessarily be great inequalities of property and condition, and the number of the poor will greatly exceed that of the rich. This alone will furnish unprincipled ambition with means to subvert a free state, or compel it to adopt in its own defence principles and provisions which are hostile to popular liberty. Thus, as I reason, whether the government of a free state or the faction which opposes it prevails, popular liberty will find a new restraint at the issue of every conflict. If the government is successful, the restraint will be legitimate and salutary; but, if faction triumphs, there will nothing of rational liberty remain. I ought to apologize for drawing you into these painful speculations, but they absorb my own mind so much that I can write nothing else.

I beg to be remembered affectionately to Mrs. Pickering, and that you will ever believe me your faithful and much obliged friend. GEORGE CABOT.

P. S. — There has been more appearance of deep and well-digested design on the part of our Jacobins at the late election in this district than I have seen. It seemed as if they had been all instructed individually to be silent on the subject previous to the election, and every man to attend and give his vote. For this latter purpose, I have reason to believe that select persons went through the district and called out every Jacobin vote. I mention this, because, if it happened so in other places, we must not doubt the systematic process.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

TRENTON, Nov. 10, 1798.

DEAR SIR, — I have just received your favor of the 31st ult. I am glad that Mr. Gerry has been so explicit in respect to the character of the French government. But how will this consis-

with his intimations (and, if I mistake not, they repeatedly occur in his official report since his return home) of that government being sincere in its desires of peace and reconciliation with the United States? When I can again read his budget, I will correct the mistake, if I now make one. I am satisfied that the true friends of their country need be under no apprehensions concerning General Marshall's rectitude or steadiness. It is a great misfortune that the President's *promptness* (I might use another word) of opinion and his strong predilection for Gerry should have given countenance and support to the pretensions and conduct of Knox and Gerry; but, in respect to the former, he must certainly be convinced of his error, and, when he reads Marshall's journal (a copy of which I have purposely taken, and the verity of which will be confirmed by General Pinckney), he will be convinced of Gerry's disgraceful pusillanimity, weakness, duplicity, and I think treachery. By my last, enclosing a copy of my letter to the President, you will see I have announced so much to him. The President's unbiassed opinion of General Marshall I cannot withhold from you. It is given in a letter, dated September 26, when filling the vacant seat on the bench of the Supreme Court. The only candidates about whom there appeared any competition in the President's mind were Bushrod Washington and General Marshall. I gave to the President reasons why Marshall would decline the office. The President, in his answer, said he could not blame him if he should decline. Washington was the alternative. Of both, the President wrote me thus: "The name, the connections, the character, the merit and abilities of Mr. Washington, are greatly respected; but I still think that General Marshall ought to be preferred. Of the three envoys, the conduct of Marshall alone has been entirely satisfactory, and ought to be marked by the most decided approbation of the public. He has raised the American people in their own esteem; and, if the influence of truth and justice, reason and argument, is not lost in Europe, he has raised the consideration of the United States in that quarter of the world." And be assured, my dear sir, that this opinion of Marshall is correct, in respect to *his efficiency* in the mission. But I am yet to learn in what General Pinckney is reprehensible. There is not to be found a more honorable man. He does honor to Marshall's eminent qualities of mind and heart. The *despatches* would have appeared to still greater advantage in style, sentiment,

and energy, had they been adopted from Marshall's pen; but for the sake of unanimity, to gain Gerry's signature, Pinckney and Marshall were obliged to let them pass through his alembic, in which you will readily imagine that much of the spirit escaped. I hope Marshall may get into Congress. His general politics are well known, and his integrity is unblemished. He will assuredly act with the intelligent New England men. Gerry has the foolish vanity to imagine that he himself represents the sense and virtue of his immediate countrymen; and, as it was impossible for Marshall, fatigued with his delays and pertinacity in trifling objections, disgusted with his wrongheadedness, and indignant at his duplicity, ultimately not to manifest his contempt for him, Gerry has transferred this contempt to his country.

I remain, my dear sir, with great truth and esteem,

Your faithful friend and servant,

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, Nov. 17, 1798.

DEAR SIR, — I lament that your excellent letter of the 5th could not have reached the President before he left home. It is important to himself and to the country that he should think more justly of the merits of his favorite Gerry, or, at least, that he should act as he would, if he did think justly. Your letter can hardly fail of producing this good effect, if he can have time to *ruminate* a little upon it, and give his good sense and good principles a fair chance to be consulted; and I sincerely hope this will yet happen before his speech to Congress is prepared, as I have some reason to fear he will repeat the sentiments expressed to the Machias addressers, and perhaps be more pointed.

When I read Gerry's letter, I could hardly realize that such a tissue of miserable quibbles and wretched cavillings should be thought an *advantageous explanation* of any thing. Indeed, in my judgment, its publication would injure him as much or more than that which it proposes to answer; because, while it does not diminish the *substance* of what is implied in yours, it discovers a pitiful disposition to give such importance to the most trifling circumstances. Mr. Wolcott can tell you that in a dispute with the President at his (Mr. Wolcott's) table, concerning the character of Mr.

Gerry, I was provoked to be rude; and that I pronounced him "totally unfit to conduct any great affairs of himself, and from his captious and jealous temper altogether unqualified to act with others." Such he has always been; such his late colleagues have found him; and such, I am persuaded, even the French now think him.[1] Decency would forbid me to revive in the mind of the President a subject of so much mortification as our dispute would prove, after what he knows of the envoyship; and, on this account, I have not dared to speak to him upon it. But I have been surprised that so little public disapprobation of Gerry should have been expressed, since he himself has furnished abundant testimony of his own unworthiness, in entering into conferences with Talleyrand under a stipulation that his colleagues should not be informed by him of that which he was bound in duty to tell them. This was not merely unfaithfulness, — a sort of negative fault, — it was positive treachery; it was co-operating with an insidious enemy in his attempts to divide our country, after he had avowed his expectation of subduing it by the force of our divisions. After all, such is our feeble condition that it is expedient to be silent, and, if possible, to prevent a public investigation which may make new schisms. On this account I am extremely solicitous that the President should perceive that a disposition to cover the follies and faults of Gerry, if not repressed, will eventually bring forward Pinckney and Marshall to criminate him; and that they, with truth and justice on their side, will necessarily be supported by all men of virtue, honor, and ability.

I lament with you the misfortunes of Knox on his own account, and, I am sorry to add, on that of the public; for already he begins to intimate, though obscurely, that Hamilton is a man of insatiable ambition and not to be trusted.

I am always, with high esteem and true affection,

Your faithful G. CABOT.

[1] The justice of this surmise may be gathered from Talleyrand's declaration, that "he [Gerry] wanted decision at a moment when he might easily have adjusted every thing, that he was too irresolute, and that the correspondence between them was a curious monument of advances on his part and evasions on Gerry's." Pinckney's opinion of his colleague was even worse. He wrote "that he had never met with a man so destitute of candor and so full of deceit." (See Hildreth, V. 261.) Pinckney, no doubt, judged Gerry harshly; but it is evident that the latter showed his mental incapacity most clearly to all concerned in this business.

Cabot to Pickering.

Brookline, Nov. 24, 1798.

My dear Sir, — The mail of yesterday brought me your favor of the 10th. I have some fears that, while I have stated to you the opinions which Mr. Gerry has openly avowed, I may have seemed to think him consistent. You need not examine his budget to discover whether you have done him justice in making him the advocate of Directorial sincerity. However absurd it may be, he has assured some of our Jacobin leaders (the Winthrops particularly) that the French were sincere in their professions of desiring an honorable peace with us. In all this, every thing will be intelligible to those who know Gerry and his conduct in the late mission; to all others, it must be unintelligible. Gerry can offer no excuse for listening to the proposal of his French friends to remain in France, without urging as a part of it his own belief that a safe and an honorable adjustment might have been made with them. He did not intend to be their tool, but he was their dupe. He is too proud, however, to confess, if he is not too self-conceited to see the latter; and he asserts the former by his unreserved censures of them in every thing, except their disposition of peace towards us. It would be natural to ask how the President could possibly be imposed upon by any explanations which could be made of such gross folly and misconduct. Here it is impossible not to see a strong motive which Gerry would have to applaud the executive administration; and, without going further, we may account for all that Gerry professes to individuals, while his reserve to the public may be fairly ascribed to his determination to retain the Jacobin suffrages at all events. It has been proposed in private circles to invite him to express formally to the public that approbation of our own government and that condemnation of the French which he has declared to individuals; but no act of his life that I have known will warrant the expectation of his doing a thing so obviously proper, in the opinion of wise and good men, unless it coincided with some of his paltry selfish purposes.

I had made the same reflection on Gerry's opinions concerning General Marshall which you have expressed; and I concur fully with you in the sentiments that his merit is of the first order, and that he is to be cherished as a most precious acquisition to the cause of order, morality, and good government.

Our people have become silent, and satisfied with the distribution of the military trusts. The knowing ones are better pleased than they would have been with an acquiescence by Knox.

We are rejoicing cordially that Nelson has given a decisive blow to the naval power of the French tyrants in the Mediterranean. If our country could act up to the standard of its executive administration, the Gallic crows would soon pick the carcasses of each other. I remain always, with unfeigned affection,

Your faithful friend, and obliged GEORGE CABOT.

GORE TO CABOT.

LONDON, Dec. 8, 1798.

DEAR SIR, — Thinking and hoping, as I do, that no terms will be offered by the French that can induce our government to resume a negotiation on the subject of their depredations, has restrained me from writing my sentiments on the manner of arranging the terms of an article, that should adjust either the objects, or measure of compensation, or the requisite circumstances which should entitle the object to the consideration and decision of those appointed to award the compensation. In the low state of French despotism, the Directory may propose terms; and, although no one would believe that any would be kept, that were obligatory on them, yet the government may feel it inexpedient to refuse acceding to them. In such an event, great care should be taken, in wording the article, to include all cases, and exclude all doubt as to the objects, both as to quality and time of examination by the board, — not with any expectation of deriving satisfaction for the injury, but with the view of more completely and definitely fixing the breach, so as to leave nothing for their supporters or apologists to allege in their behalf, or against the United States. The article under which we act has, by some people, been settled down to the most senseless jumble of words that two men could have thrown together. The description, according to these commentators, contained no case for the board, where the High Court of Appeals had acted, because it never could be conceived that this government would have subjected the decisions of so high and respectable a tribunal to the revision or examination of another. It did not contain any that had not passed through all the courts; because it was only in cases where compensation could not be

obtained in the ordinary course of judicial proceedings that the board was to take cognizance.

The board could not examine any cases yet pending in the courts, prior to the term allotted for presenting memorials, for the last-mentioned reason; nor afterward, because it had no authority to receive; nor at the time of its completion, because the very assertion of the cause yet being undecided in the courts of the Crown showed that there was still wanting proof of a material allegation, — viz., that compensation could not be obtained in the ordinary course, which fact, said these gentlemen, only can appear by proof of having resorted to and exhausted all the judicial means, and that these had failed. In my opinion, the words used in the British treaty were adequate to the end; but if a nation, possessing like this a character for integrity, and desirous of sustaining that character, should, under the existing circumstances, be disposed to cavil, and fritter down to nothing the provisions of a treaty, what are we to expect from another, the reverse of every thing good, wise, or honorable? We should leave no uncertainty in language, no terms under which their advocates may apologize for their breaches. Beside general and comprehensive terms, it would be well to insert particular descriptions, taking care at the same time not to diminish the force and extent of the former by the insertion of the latter. All conclusions unfavorable to the claimants, which might be drawn from the terms, should by express provision be excluded.

You may ask why I do not write these remarks to Mr. Pickering. My answer is, I have no correspondence with him, other than a joint and official one on the subjects of our duties; and reasons of delicacy forbid such an intrusion in this way. He knows all the objections that have been raised; and, if his mind should contemplate them on making a similar arrangement, he will not fail to use all necessary cautions. If, in the course of events, a new attempt should be made at negotiation, you can just suggest, if you think proper, some of these things to his recollection. Express provision should also be made that those who execute the commission should be entitled to the immunities of public ministers. It would give weight to the commission, avoid inconveniences to the individuals, and could never disserve the country who expected benefit from such an arrangement.

In our present relation to Great Britain, it is more than proba-

ble we may finish our commission in the course of time. But there is a coldness, phlegm, and delay, among those who think they have an indispensable right and duty to decide before the cause is examined by us, that calls for all the patience of my constitution. When we meet, this will be a fit subject for conversation, and more fit than for paper.

I have read, with great satisfaction, Mr. Pickering's letter to the addresses from Prince Edward County. I have read, also, General Marshall's letter, and answers to queries. Gallatin is re-elected, and Lyon [1] will be. The elections make us tremble for the safety as well as honor of our country. I rejoice sincerely in the final adjustment of the questions between Hamilton, &c. That Knox should be embarrassed in his pecuniary affairs, and General Lincoln involved with him, I do most heartily regret. I was the more pleased to learn that the military etiquette was disposed of, as I foresaw in its progress great parties of new division among those whose unanimity is indispensably necessary to the salvation of our country.

Since the understanding between Toussaint the Black and the British government, possibly the trade of St. Domingo may be opened to our people. But what the designs of this government are, I cannot tell, — probably their monopoly system. However, I think we can easily defeat them, in such a scheme as respects St. Domingo. Buonaparte, having possessed himself of Egypt, will, in a great measure, cut off the Turks from their supplies of rice, coffee, &c., which they formerly received by the way of Alexandria at Constantinople. And it is very probable our vessels might make beneficial voyages to this last-mentioned place. Fish, and the articles of the East Indies, are much wanted there. And foreign shipping is much employed in freighting from Constantinople to the various ports in the Levant. A Mr. Abbot tells me that, several years ago, a ship came to Constantinople direct from India. The house of which he is a member succeeded in procuring her admission, on terms of the most favored nation. Should this be an advantageous trade for our merchants, it would be

[1] Matthew Lyon, then a member of Congress from Vermont, and afterwards from Kentucky. He was a well-known Democrat in his day, a good deal of a demagogue, a rough and ready debater; and the thrashing he received at the hands of Roger Griswold, on the floor of the House, gave him at the time considerable notoriety.

advisable for our government to adopt measures for placing the commerce on a permanent footing by treaty with the Porte. The present time will probably be as favorable as any future period. We ought, likewise, to secure a free passage into the Black Sea, and this should be settled with the Emperor of Russia. Great Britain would, at least at present, not thwart us in these views. I understand she says she would promote our views on these subjects.

There is a report of a battle between Jourdan and the Austrians, but it does not come in such a way as to obtain credit.

Yours truly, C. G.

Cabot to Pickering.

Brookline, Dec. 14, 1798.

My dear Sir, — I have been unable to comprehend the motives which influence the Federalists to neglect the infinitely important subject of electing the President and Vice-President. The defect of the constitution in this particular is so obvious, and the inconvenience and absurdity of it so much felt, that I should imagine a proposition to amend it could not fail of success. It is certain that in the late election we were in great danger of seeing a French President instead of an American placed in the chair, when a majority of the electors were truly Americans, merely because each elector could not constitutionally determine the character of his own vote. If this article in the Constitution is not amended, we shall be exposed to great embarrassments at the next election, as we were at the last; and the evil of division and jealousy among men who have the same honest views will be unavoidable. It will be the opinion of many good men, as it was before, that the public safety requires *first* to exclude the enemies of our country, and *then* to choose the best of its friends, but not to hazard the success of the former for a preference among the latter. This principle of action will be held sacred by many of the truest patriots; but it will not always be admitted by others to be any thing more than a good cover for supporting a favorite candidate, or opposing one who ought to be elected. You know that many painful heartburnings have more than once been produced among those whom we esteem, and that very lately (perhaps now) this same business disturbs the harmony of our first councils.

I have troubled you with this hint, because there is no time

to be lost. If two-thirds of each House will agree this session to recommend the amendment, the State legislatures may ratify it in good season; but, if not, I should think every possible exertion should be made in the States to accomplish it with the next Congress, which I *trust* will be somewhat better than the present. I am looking impatiently for the President's speech, with some hope that he will say frankly that the safety and independence of the United States are endangered by the personal intercourse between us and our insidious and perfidious enemy; and that war, by ending it, would tend to secure us, and make every man's rights and duties plain and clear. There are, in my mind, irresistible reasons for changing the present state of things, even if unqualified war is inexpedient. Why should our merchants be denied the liberty of making reprisals on those who have an *authorized* right to plunder them? Our enemies have no commerce, but they often capture the property of every nation which has, and opportunities to recapture their prizes will sometimes occur, especially as our armed vessels are very numerous, and becoming daily more so. Besides this, encouragement to private armaments would add greatly to our strength and security, by increasing our seamen and training them to the management of armed vessels. On the other hand, there is no possibility of losing any thing. France wars upon us now as much as she is able, and will certainly apply more force, if she can with a prospect of success. Why not preclude her, therefore, by every possible augmentation of our own force? She will be humble and respectful, and even *just* toward us, *precisely in proportion to her estimate of our power.*

Yours faithfully, G. C.

CHAPTER VII.

1799.

The Second Mission to France. — Views of Mr. Cabot. — Correspondence.

THE great event of the year 1799 was the President's renewal of negotiations with France. This change of policy, which proved the immediate cause of the downfall of the Federalists' party, forms, to the exclusion of all else, the subject of Mr. Cabot's letters during this year. The appointment of the new commission was in all ways of the deepest and most far-reaching consequence; and, since Mr. Cabot was a prominent representative of the opinions held by most of the leading Federalists, a few pages will not, I hope, be wasted in defining briefly, and if possible accurately, his exact position in regard to this famous measure.

Several important bills introduced early in the session by the committee on defence were still before Congress when the new year opened. Gallatin, then heading the opposition, objected to the passage of these bills until certain additional documents, promised by the President and relating to the recent negotiations, were laid before the House. Early in January, 1799, the President sent in the desired papers, comprising Gerry's correspondence with Talleyrand, and certain letters from the consul-general, Skipwith. These were soon followed by an elaborate report from Colonel Pickering on French affairs, drawn with considerable ability, and reflecting with much sharpness on all that related to Talleyrand, the Directory, and Gerry. Within a few days after this report, the President transmitted to Congress information of a new French decree, by

the terms of which all Americans serving in hostile vessels were, if captured, to be condemned to the treatment of pirates. Thus stimulated, the House passed a retaliation bill in answer to the new decree, renewed the act of non-intercourse with France, and made large appropriations for the navy, while the Senate passed a bill providing for a greatly increased army. The Legislature was engaged upon these vigorous measures, when they and the public generally were startled by the President's nomination of William Vans Murray, resident minister at the Hague, to be minister plenipotentiary to the French Republic. Public opinion at that time was much divided on the subject of French affairs. A large section of the Democratic party, including all the worst foreign elements, and led by Jefferson, favored peace with France on any and all terms. They were actuated by a sentimental adoration of any thing called a republic, by the Jacobin spirit then at its height, and many of them by a general love of faction and hatred of order. Most strongly opposed to these extremists were the Federalist leaders, among whom Hamilton was conspicuous. These men saw clearly that peace and a strong neutrality were for the best interests of the country, but they were convinced that neither of these objects could be served by further negotiations with France. They believed that a French peace at that time would be taken merely as an evidence of weakness, could not be lasting, and would invigorate Jacobinism in the United States. On the other hand, they felt confident that a French war would give life to the national sentiment, strengthen the administration, and secure their own party supremacy. Between the partisans who favored peace on any terms and the war Federalists were a portion of the Democratic and the larger part of the Federalist party. This party of the centre composed a majority of the whole nation. They were of that class so varying in numbers, but so inevitably found under every constitutional government at all times and seasons, which is always ready to follow any

leader who seems to consult most carefully the immediate interest and dignity of the country. This large floating vote had been driven over to the support of the war Federalists by the outrageous conduct of France toward the first commission. So great an accession of popular strength had raised the war party to a position of absolute control in the country; and the nomination of Murray, indicating what seemed a complete change of policy on the part of the executive, fell upon them in the hour of their success with overwhelming effect. They felt instinctively that the great mass of the people would sympathize with the President's action, and that they must bow to a public opinion which it would be madness to resist. Exasperated, amazed, bewildered, the war party yielded, and sought merely to palliate what they could not entirely prevent. They succeeded in enlarging to three the number of envoys, and with this for the time they were fain to be content.

Mr. Cabot's letters give a clear picture of the views of the more moderate type of Federalist leader at this period. But, before tracing in outline the contents of these letters, it becomes necessary to define briefly the controversy to which they relate, and the dire results which that controversy produced. The conflict arose upon a policy, the soundness of which no one would to-day think of questioning; yet when it was adopted by Mr. Adams, in 1799, it resulted in the common ruin of President and party. That it should have turned out in this way was owing to many causes, of which some are not readily apparent. Because a portion of the party held erroneous views, and because the President, in opposition to these views, carried through a proper policy, is but an unsatisfactory explanation of the consequent defeat of the Federalists. Parties of far less strength have survived greater differences of opinion; but the causes of defeat in this instance lay deeper, and were inherent not only in the party, but also in the character of the prominent men. There were too many leaders in the Federalist party,

and all these leaders were unbending and dogmatic in a greater or less degree. Most unfortunately, too, the principal supporters of the differing policies held the two highest offices in the administration, and, when opposed, were as determined and unyielding as any men in the whole country. The outlook was certainly not a hopeful one, if any violent difference of opinion arose in a party so composed and so situated. Fortunately for the historical interests involved, all those principally concerned have left elaborate accounts of what they severally said, did, and thought. The letters to the "Boston Patriot" explain Mr. Adams's position; Hamilton's famous pamphlet, his letters and those of Pickering, Wolcott, McHenry, Ames, and Cabot, define the attitude of the war Federalists; while a letter from Mr. Stoddert, the Secretary of the Navy, represents the opinion of moderate men both in and out of the cabinet.[1]

The first intimation of the contemplated change of policy on the part of the President was given at the opening of the session. Influenced by Gerry's reports, Mr. Adams wished to state in his message that, while the war measures already on foot ought by no means to be abandoned, the door was still to be kept open for negotiation whenever France should evince a proper respect toward the United States. Such sentiments as these were resisted in the cabinet. Pickering, followed by Wolcott and McHenry, strenuously opposed the insertion in the message of any paragraph which even hinted at the possibility of our sending another minister to France. Stoddert and Lee inclined to the same views, but the character of their opposition was mild and temperate. The President nevertheless persisted, and from

[1] This important letter was addressed to Mr. Adams at the time of the publication of the "Patriot" letters. Mr. Adams did not publish Mr. Stoddert's letter, and replied to but one or two of the objections which were offered in it. As I shall have occasion to refer to this letter, and from its intrinsic value, I have printed it in full in this connection, and also one from James McHenry, the Secretary of War; so that all sides are now before the public. I am indebted to the Pickering manuscripts, in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society, for the letters of both Stoddert and McHenry on this important question.

the manner in which the message was received it was evident that public opinion coincided with the views of Mr. Adams.

Mr. Cabot's letters during the early part of the year are largely occupied with the subject of the message. He was disappointed at the conciliatory tone therein adopted, and was surprised at what seemed to him indications of hesitation and uncertainty in the President's policy. He also regretted that the tone of Colonel Pickering's report had been moderated, but neither of these incidents in the least prepared his mind for what was to follow. The war Federalists were so confident of the strength of their position, and believed the success and maintenance of their policy to be so assured, that they had no apprehension of an entire reversal of all their schemes by any action of the President. They were destined to be quickly undeceived.

During the winter, Mr. Adams received through Pichon, the French Secretary at the Hague, and thence through Murray, our minister at the same place, assurances of a disposition on the part of the French government to renew negotiations in a proper spirit. Acting on this information, Mr. Adams, without any warning to his cabinet, sent to the Senate the nomination of William Vans Murray to be minister plenipotentiary to the French Republic. No nomination probably ever produced such a profound sensation. No one understood precisely what it meant, though everybody recognized at once its gravity and importance. The blow fell most severely on the dominant Federalists all over the country, and to no one did it cause more bitter disappointment than to Mr. Cabot. He had been, since Pinckney's dismissal, a most consistent opponent of any negotiations with France until she had learned to treat us with respect; and no one had so strongly and persistently opposed the first mission. The conduct of Talleyrand and the failure of the first ambassadors seemed to Mr. Cabot to assure the maintenance of a vigorous policy, and the eradi-

cation of Jacobinism in the United States. He believed that fresh negotiations were not only wrong, but impossible, without great advances from the French. The news of the new nomination therefore filled him with indignation; for he considered peace with France to mean a revival of French principles in the United States, and the utter loss of any real national independence. There is now no difficulty in perceiving that Mr. Cabot and his wing of the party erred completely in maintaining so unyielding an attitude toward France. But it was not then so easy to decide rightly, and the war policy could be supported by many plausible and some sound arguments; and this fact, while it palliates the mistakes of the Federal leaders, reflects credit on the power of the President's judgment. The verdict of history must be given in Mr. Adams's favor, so far as the general policy towards France is concerned. Nor is the fact that the nation generally sympathized with his course any detraction from his merit. Almost all the leaders of his party opposed him. They were all men of ability and determination, and they possessed an amount of political weight and actual power that it is now difficult to conceive. In their hands rested the power to ruin the President and destroy the party, and it required as much boldness and tenacity of purpose to resist them as to oppose the wishes of the greatest popular majority. There can be no doubt that Mr. Adams acted wisely and patriotically, and that in opposing his party on what might well appear a doubtful question, for the sake of his country, he displayed the highest courage. This is sufficient praise for any statesman, but it is much to be regretted that approbation of Mr. Adams's course must stop here. The manner in which the policy was carried through was as wholly wrong as the policy itself was wholly right.

The first and capital mistake was the President's refusal to consult his secretaries. The condemnation of this step may be drawn from Mr. Adams's own account: no other

testimony is needed. The letters to the "Boston Patriot" are occupied principally with a very complete defence of the general policy and sources of information leading to Murray's nomination, and with violent, ill-timed, and distasteful denunciations of Hamilton; but they are singularly unsatisfactory on the all-important question of not consulting the cabinet.

The defence made by Mr. Adams, on this point, substantially is that he knew the secretaries would oppose him openly and secretly, and therefore deemed it useless to consult them. If this is the only defence, and it seems to be so, it is really no defence at all. In every way, such a step was a fatal and irretrievable blunder. Mr. Adams's courage was undoubted, and of the highest kind; yet this avoidance of his secretaries gave an air of timidity and evasion to the whole business. An appearance of weakness was thereby communicated to an otherwise impregnable position. Moreover, it infuriated his opponents in the cabinet, estranged many men who might otherwise have been conciliated, and left the moderate members of the party entirely adrift. Stoddert says that, if Mr. Adams had consulted the cabinet, he would have had a majority in his favor. This seems hardly probable; but it is certain from such a statement that Mr. Adams would have received the support of at least two of his secretaries. Putting aside the fact that it was the duty of the President to consult his cabinet, it is nevertheless clear that such an omission was a grave political blunder. The opposition which he anticipated was embittered, not avoided, by the refusal to consult; and Mr. Adams lost in this way the grand opportunity of starting the measure with a portion of his cabinet pledged to its support. Stoddert and Lee by no means relished the domination of their colleague in the state department, and were quite ready to accept the President's lead. But the tacit rejection of their counsels forced them back into a silent adhesion to Colonel Pickering. In a word, Mr.

Adams was master of the situation; and he threw away the advantages of his position, by refusing to meet opposition at the outset. He united when he should have divided, and he afterwards divided when he should have strained every nerve to conciliate and to unite.

A partial explanation of the origin of these capital mistakes may be found in the lack of tact, which is so striking in Mr. Adams's character. But even the fact that he could not deal with other men judiciously does not account for his extraordinary mismanagement in this instance. Every thing was in his favor, and yet he contrived to do right only at the heavy expense of party ruin. A comparison of the following letters of McHenry and Stoddert, both moderate men, with those of Mr. Adams to the "Boston Patriot," makes all the difficulties of the last Federalist administration perfectly comprehensible. The want of cordiality between the President and his advisers, which existed from the beginning, becomes, from these letters, more apparent than ever; but the real secret is to be found in the peculiar temperament of Mr. Adams. Not a suspicious man by nature, but frank and open, almost to a fault, if his distrust was once awakened, there were then no bounds to his dark imaginings. He had a fair share of jealousy in his composition, and a large amount of self-confidence; but the fatal element was the rapid process of mental exaggeration. When this once began, there were no limits; and he supplemented this imaginative power by an absolute and honest conviction of the truth of the conceptions he had himself framed. In the affair of the major-generals, he ran sharply against the opposition of Colonel Pickering; and he felt at that time that the influence of the leaders was brought to bear against him. So far, all was natural. This was not the first nor the last time that cabinet officers resisted their superior, or that party leaders had striven to control their chief. But Mr. Adams did not stop here, and endeavor, as a more astute

man would have done, to quietly frustrate and disarm his opponents. He resisted stubbornly, and yielded only under pressure; and then he proceeded to account for his troubles, after his own fashion. We can see in the letters to the "Boston Patriot," with shadows deepened by the lapse of time, the picture which Mr. Adams drew, in his own mind, of his opponents and their arrangements. Jealousy led him to suppose Hamilton his great enemy. Hence Hamilton was the *Deus ex machina* who guided the cabinet, the "mightier spirit" who moved the political puppets. Hamilton, thirsting after empire, and seeking to rise upon the ruins of the republic, was the central figure in the background. Then came the cabinet, organized in a compact conspiracy against him; then the Federalist leaders, in the part of assistant conspirators, and the Senate and the press as their adjuncts. Now if this description be compared with McHenry's and Stoddert's letters, the conspiracy vanishes, the organized cabinet disappears, and we find that one certainly, and probably two, of the secretaries, had no knowledge even of Hamilton's opinion. Instead of Hamilton as the leader of opposition, it is clear, from all the sources, that Colonel Pickering was far more entitled to that place, and that it was he who aspired to lead the party, and control not only the President, but Hamilton himself. As to Hamilton's dreams of empire, this is not the place for a discussion of them; but, whoever the dreamer was in this case, the delusions remained delusions, and nothing more. So long as Mr. Adams merely amused himself by constructing these theories, no harm was done; but, unluckily, he acted upon them as if they were as well established as the movement of the tides. Thus it was that, on the theory of a conspiracy, he refused to consult his cabinet, and by uniting his cabinet and the party leaders on a perfectly tenable ground did much to give reality to his own preconceived ideas. There was opposition to Mr. Adams, in the cabinet and in the party, from the time of the affair of the major-

generals; and it rapidly hardened and consolidated. But neither an organized opposition of the whole cabinet, nor a combined and extended confederation among the leaders to control the executive, seems ever to have existed, except in the mind of Mr. Adams himself. His own vehement temperament, his uncompromising disposition, and his rapid conversion of simple incidents into extensive and portentous combinations were his worst enemies.

STODDERT TO JOHN ADAMS.

BLADENSBURG, 12th October, 1809.

DEAR SIR, — Until within a few days, I had only seen detached parts of your letters published in the "Boston Patriot." I have now a pamphlet containing eighteen letters: I presume the first eighteen you sent to the press. I do not know that more have been published.

It was impossible for me to read these letters, and subscribe to their justice, — at least, so far as they respect myself. You have connected me with acts in which I had no concern. You have produced an impression that there was not one head of a department under your administration who felt the obligation imposed on him by his official situation to be faithful to your reputation, as well as to the public interest; and you give too much countenance to an opinion, that the heads of departments, if not themselves the blind partisans of a foreign government, were under the influence — the contemptible tools — of men who were.

For myself I say, and I appeal to every part of my conduct for the verity of what I say, that you have done me the highest injustice; that never did I forget I was bound by honor to protect your reputation so long as I remained your confidential adviser. Nor am I so nice a casuist as to be able to discern at what period since, the obligation, which I cannot but consider in some degree mutual between a President and a head of a department, ceased. That in no instance did an overweening partiality for any foreign government make me lose sight for a moment of the honor or the interest of my own. As to General Hamilton, I scarcely knew him; and perhaps my crime as to him was that, though believing highly of the brilliancy of his talents and of his sincere patriotism

and honorable principles, I never entertained an exalted opinion of his discretion or the solidity of his judgment, and always thought it unfortunate for the Federal party, and of course for the country, — for I believe the views of that party have always been directed to the best interests of the country, — that the opinions of this gentleman were deemed so oracular.

But to come to facts. You say the five heads of departments were unanimously against the appointment of Mr. Gerry, "and you were shocked at such inveterate prejudices;" in another place, "None but the friends of Hamilton would go down with the heads of departments." It was not until June, 1798, that I had the misfortune to be called to office. Well may I say "misfortune," for such I have ever since found it. Mr. Gerry, I believe, was appointed in 1797: he had long been in France. Before I was in office, and until I was in office, there were but four heads of departments.

In the nomination of Mr. Murray to France, you say: "You knew the sentiments of all your ministers, and the *secret* motives that governed them better than they did themselves. You knew, if you had asked their advice, three of them would very laconically protest against the measure: the other two would have been loath to dissent from their brethren, and would more modestly and mildly concur with them. The consequence would be that the whole would be instantly communicated to A, B, C, D, &c., the public and the presses would have it at once, and such a clamor raised as to excite the Senate to put their negative upon the whole plan." Against the justice of this whole charge and every part of it implicating me, I solemnly protest. Prior to this time, I do not believe I had met in cabinet more than three times, except on the subject of the commission under the British treaty. Once, I recollect, there was a meeting in consequence of the Pennsylvania insurrection,[1] on which occasion the departments were not unanimous in advising the course to be pursued. I well remember that the majority was against my opinion, as to the importance proper to be given to the governor of the State in suppressing that insurrection. Oh that you had adopted the opinion of the majority! This was a matter of no little importance; but I mention it merely to show that there was not that weak, criminal acquiescence of some of the heads of departments to the opinions of others which you describe.

But on this particular subject, the nomination of Mr. Murray

[1] The Fries rebellion.

to France: I had never seen, prior to his nomination, his letter to you, — the only circumstance which made the measure a proper one. Of course, you could not have known what my opinion would have been with that document before me. One or two days after the nomination, you showed me the letter, and voluntarily entered into some explanation why you had taken the step without consulting the heads of departments. It is not necessary, nor would my memory enable me, to repeat all that passed on that occasion. You had reason to believe I did not hold myself at liberty to oppose a measure of yours and retain my office; and I strongly advised you, since the nomination of Mr. Murray was made, to adhere to it, expressing my conviction that the Senate would acquiesce. You were then determined to adhere; but afterwards, and perhaps more wisely, though I think at the expense of some personal dignity, made a modification of your message.

Until this time — and, indeed, during the whole time I was in office — my own department required my whole attention, and I had as little leisure as inclination to attend to the affairs of other departments. Before I entered into office, the only system I ever knew of, as to our foreign relations, had been formed; and this system was to be found in the laws and in the public acts of the executives. I heard of no intended deviation from it from you, or from any of the heads of departments. It had been determined to resist the aggressions of France, but to leave wide open the door of reconciliation with perfect honor. A majority of a caucus, composed entirely of Federal members of the two Houses, would not agree to a declaration of war; and the result of the meeting showed too plainly to be mistaken by the President that it was his duty to avail himself of the first fair opportunity that presented for seeking reconciliation, without debasement. The Democratic party was certainly averse to war; so was the Federal party, if war could be avoided without dishonor.

In this view of the subject, — and to my understanding it is a true one, — I cannot conceive how you could have avoided instituting a negotiation on the receipt of Mr. Murray's letter; nor can I perceive on what ground the five heads of departments, or any of them, would have given their advice against the measure, had they been consulted. All might not have agreed in the nomination of Mr. Murray, but I am convinced there would have been a majority for his appointment. It was the manner and not the

matter of that measure, the holding them up to the world as persons in whom you could not confide in a thing that might lead to peace with France, that created the dissatisfaction on the part of the heads of departments, and the opposition — if there really was opposition — through their means.

To say there was not great dissatisfaction would be uncandid. It was not possible there should not be, if the heads of departments possessed the feelings of men fit for exalted stations. I felt it myself, though perhaps having the least right of any to feel it, if from no other cause, from the short time I had been in office, and my little experience as a statesman; and I deliberated seriously with myself whether it did not become me at once to resign my office. Not resigning, there was, according to my own notions of right, which will always govern my own conduct, but one proper course for me to pursue: to act always as if the measure of a new negotiation with France had been taken with my advice.

Some other things I would notice, but I fear I have already exhausted your patience. I must, however, say a word as to the meeting at Trenton, and the letter from the five heads of departments. Of the letter, I will only say that I have entirely forgotten its contents, if it advised a relinquishment of the measure of the mission, or any thing more than a short suspension of it, in consequence of the then uncertain state of France. I wish the letter had been published. When you arrived at Trenton, the causes that had produced the letter had in some degree subsided, and it was less proper to suspend the mission than it had appeared to be a few weeks before; and, for my own part, I then thought it most proper the mission should proceed. If I did not say so to you, it was because there was no occasion for it. You came to Trenton seemingly determined. The departments met you to consider the instructions to the ministers, but never I think to discuss the propriety of sending on the mission; and I believe you have been mistaken in ascribing to the heads of departments language held with you by General Hamilton and others at Trenton. I pretend not, however, to know the language held by others. I know such language was not held by me.

Yours, &c. BEN. STODDERT.

McHenry to Pickering.

Near Baltimore, Feb. 23, 1811.

Dear Sir, — Your last letter is dated the 13th instant. I return you its enclosures; viz., Mr. Stoddert's letter to Mr. John Adams, dated the 12th, and Mr. Adams's answer, dated the 30th October, 1809, with Mr. Stoddert's to you, dated 11 February, 1811. I hope you will not be displeased at my having taken copies of them.

I have at length procured Mr. Adams's printed correspondence with the editor of the "Boston Patriot," in eighteen letters. From the cursory reading, I perceive he has fallen into many errors, some important forgetfulness, and not a few striking misrepresentations, to say nothing of his coarse and unmanly abuse of a deceased statesman.

How many recollections have these puerile letters awakened! Still, in his own opinion, the greatest man of the age, I see he will carry with him to the grave his vanity, his weaknesses and follies, specimens of which we have so often witnessed, and always endeavored to veil from the public.

In letter No. 10, Mr. Adams, speaking of the second abortive mission to France, observes: "I mentioned Mr. Dana and Mr. Gerry to the heads of departments, and many leading men in both houses. They all preferred Mr. Dana. But it was evident enough to me that neither Dana nor Gerry was their man. Dana was appointed, and refused. I then called the heads of departments together, and proposed Mr. Gerry. All five were unanimously against him. Such inveterate prejudice shocked me. I said nothing, but I was determined I would not be the slave of it."

This statement wants correctness. Mr. Stoddert, in his letter to Mr. Adams (above mentioned), denies the possibility of his being present, as his appointment of Secretary of the Navy did not take place till some time after. I well remember the meeting, for I have often thought of it since. It was composed of Mr. Wolcott, yourself, Mr. Lee, and myself. Mr. Adams, in a familiar way, said, "Gentlemen, what think you of Mr. Gerry for the mission?" None of the gentlemen offering to speak, I observed: "I have served in the old Congress with Mr. Gerry. If, sir, it was

a desirable thing to distract the mission, a fitter person could not, perhaps, be found. It is ten to one against his agreeing with his colleagues." Mr. Wolcott made some remark. Mr. Lee and you were silent. Mr. Adams replied: "Mr. Gerry was an honest and firm man, on whom French arts could have no effect. He had known him long, and knew him well." Nothing more was said on the subject, but I soon discovered that to controvert his wishes was next to incurring his enmity. Mr. Gerry was appointed with Mr. Marshall and General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney.

Justly offended at the treatment these gentlemen met with in France, it drew from him his celebrated declaration to Congress (21 June, 1798), "I will never send another minister to France, without assurances that he will be received, respected, and honored as the representative of a great, free, powerful, and independent nation."

I shall not pretend to penetrate into all the motives that weighed with Mr. Adams, to retire from the ground of this declaration, and send a third mission to France. He acknowledges he concealed his intention from the heads of departments, and signifies that he was equally careful not to intrust it with any member (meaning Federal members) of either branch of Congress. "I knew (Letter XI.) if I called the heads of departments together, and asked their advice, three of them (meaning you, Mr. Wolcott, and myself) would very laconically protest against the measure: the other two would more modestly and mildly concur with them." The consequence, he adds, would be that the thing would be instantly communicated to members of Congress, and a clamor raised against it in the newspapers, all which would probably have excited the Senate to put their negative on the measure.

Such are Mr. Adams's reasons for not making confidants, on this occasion, of the heads of departments. Having treated us in this account as well as he did his best friends in Congress, ought we not to thank him, and be satisfied?

With respect to the mission itself, he rests its propriety on letters written by Mr. Barlow and Mr. Codman, and twenty others, whose names I have forgotten; and on Pichon's, transmitted by Mr. Murray, coaxing and wheedling for another experiment, — all of which found their way to the President, who did not or would not perceive that the object of the French government in this machinery was to obtain instead of being obliged to send a minis-

ter, which must have taken place but for his precipitancy in catching the bait. That there was an undercurrent in this business you are not unapprised; an understanding, I mean, with others, if not with the Federal members of Congress. I shall therefore only observe that Mr. Adams furnishes positive proof that he did not put confidence in these letters or any of them.

The proof I allude to will be found in his two messages to the Senate. They are, one nominating Mr. Murray, dated Feb. 1789, the other joining with Mr. Murray, Judge Ellsworth, and Patrick Henry, dated Feb. 28, 1799. "If the Senate," says the first message, "shall advise and consent to this appointment, effectual care shall be taken in his instructions that he shall not go to France without *direct and unequivocal assurances from the French government*, signifying that he shall be received in character, shall enjoy the privileges attached to his character by the law of nations, and that a minister of equal rank, title, and powers, shall be appointed to treat with him, to discuss and conclude all controversies between the two republics by a new treaty." "It is not intended," says the second message, "that the two former gentlemen will embark for Europe until they shall have received from the executive directory assurances, signified by their secretary of foreign relations, that they shall be received in character," &c.

The condition here annexed, as a prerequisite to the envoys, going to France, being of the same import in the *first* as in the second message, it cannot be said to have been inserted at the instance of the heads of departments, or any Federal member of Congress; for Mr. Adams expressly says (Letter XI.) he concealed his intention to send a mission from them all. On his own showing, therefore, he considered the measure, at the moment of recommending it to the Senate, as resting on sand and of dubious issue. Had he thought otherwise, he would not have employed his precautionary proviso.

In Letter V., he states that the articles of instruction for this mission were unanimously agreed upon, to his intense satisfaction, and committed to the Secretary of State, who, by the by, had framed them to be reduced into a proper form, and transmitted to him at Quincy, "for revision, correction, or signature, as there might be occasion;" but that, instead of them, he received a letter signed by all five of the heads of departments, earnestly entreating

him to suspend the mission; that, upon receipt thereof, he instantly determined to go "to Trenton, meet the gentlemen face to face, confer with them coolly on the subject, and convince them, or be convinced by them, if he could." What followed this determination? He arrives at Trenton, ill of the yellow fever, or something, as he says, very like it, which he had caught at Hartford. "Ill as I was, I sent for the heads of departments. Four of them were there. The Attorney-General was gone to Virginia. Many days were employed, sometimes at my own apartments, and sometimes at their offices." Everybody at Trenton, he continues, seemed to be of opinion that the first arrivals from England would bring the news that Louis XVIII. was restored to the throne of France. Suwarrow, at the head of a Russian army, was to have marched from Italy to Paris, on one side, and Prince Charles, through Germany to Paris, on the other; and detachments from both armies to Havre, to receive the king, who was to be brought over by a British fleet, and escorted with flying colors to Versailles. I could scarcely believe my senses, when I heard such reveries. Yet the heads of departments appeared to believe them, and urged them as decisive arguments for suspending the embarkation of our envoys till the spring. In vain did I urge the immense distances the two imperial armies had to march, the great number of towns and cities in the route of both, in positions chosen with great skill, fortified with exquisite art, defended by vast trains of heavy ordnance, garrisoned by numerous troops of soldiers, perfectly disciplined and animated with all the obstinacy and ardor of the Revolutionary spirit. In vain did I allege the military maxim which would certainly govern both Prince Charles and Suwarrow, — that is, never to leave a fortified city in the rear of your army in possession of your enemy; that the siege of one town would consume the whole season; that neither the Russians nor Austrians were probably provided with mortars and heavy cannons necessary for sieges. Nothing would do: Louis XVIII. must be upon the throne of France. Well, suppose he is: what harm will there be in embarking our envoys? They will congratulate his Majesty; and if his Majesty cannot receive them under their credentials to the French republic, he will be glad to see them in his kingdom, and assure them of his royal protection till they can write home for fresh commissions, and such shall be ready for them at a minute's warning. In vain did I urge the entire change of property

in France, and the necessity the present possessors were under to defend themselves at every sacrifice and risk.

To this detail, this minuteness of time, place, and argument, Mr. Stoddert in his letter to Mr. Adams (above quoted) replies that not a word of all this passed at those meetings or conferences with the heads of departments. My recollection entirely coincides with Mr. Stoddert's. No discussion of the kind here mentioned happened, nor was the question of suspension ever touched on by any head of a department or by Mr. Adams at any of our meetings. The few official meetings we had at Trenton were exclusively employed in revising the instructions which had been agreed to in Philadelphia. On any thing relative to the question of suspension, the heads of departments observed a profound silence. We had respectfully offered our opinion, which terminated our duty, and had obtained, as I conceived, his final answer in a letter written after his receipt of ours, directing a draft of the instructions, in which he intimates that the departure of the envoys would be suspended for some time. Why has Mr. Adams omitted any notice of this fact? And why has he not favored the public with our joint letter recommending the suspension? Surely, this was a document important to his argument, and which fairness of representation required to be produced. It ought to exhibit the reasons that operated on those who signed it, and must be considered as the best interpreter of their thoughts. As instructed by my memory, it was very short. It could not therefore have contained half the trash put into our mouths by Mr. Adams. He also appears to have forgotten that, before the supplementary envoys sailed from the United States, information was received of a new revolution in the French government. This we had expected; and this event, had it pleased Mr. Adams to have produced our joint letter, it would have been seen, had the greatest weight in our recommendation. Was it possible for the most clear-sighted politician to anticipate that the envoys would be received and respected as such by the new revolutionists?

Throughout these letters, Mr. Adams affects to consider a President of the United States as every thing in government, and the heads of departments little more than mere clerks. I cannot subscribe to this hypothesis Do not the heads of departments, like him, hold a high and responsible station in government? In offering advice to a President, do they not perform an incumbent duty?

What more did we do? Less we ought not to have done. Not, therefore, to our recommendations or advice, but to his own wayward disposition, his own wavering and changeable policy, are to be charged the humiliations our country has since experienced, and the ruin of the great Federal temple erected by Washington.

Mr. Adams talks much of his system of policy respecting foreign nations. His system and ours for some years were the same. Ours was General Washington's. We held with him that we ought never to quit our own to stand upon foreign ground; under no pretext to weave our destiny with that of any European power; that our true policy was to avoid permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world; to trust to temporary ones for extraordinary emergencies, and to suitable military establishments, to enable us to act up to and avail ourselves of our maxims. Three of the gentlemen who were heads of departments with Mr. Adams were also heads of departments with General Washington. These gentlemen could never for a moment depart from his maxims; they were the soul of their system; they could not tear them from their hearts, and retain their honor and integrity; they held them to be the only sound ones for their country, the only ones proper for the guidance of our foreign affairs, and in no instance did they ever advise or countenance a departure from them. I cast back on my accuser all insinuations to the contrary.

I cannot close this letter, notwithstanding it is already longer than I intended when I sat down to write, without adverting to his entire misconception of the cause of General Hamilton's appearing at Trenton, who he says arrived there a few hours before him, and was brought there to persuade him to countermand the mission. I have, be assured, no reason or ground for supposing that the General was apprised or had any knowledge of the President's approach; and I know the business that occasioned his coming to Trenton was with my department. If he had any other, I am totally ignorant of it. Being in Trenton, it was proper he should visit Mr. Adams. If the mission became a subject of their conversation, does it follow that it was his errand to argue him out of it? This, to say no worse of it, is miserable logic. General Hamilton never mentioned to me what passed at his visit, or whether any thing was said respecting the mission. The fact is, to complete his instructions to General Wilkinson, who was to be disposed on the frontiers, it was necessary to consult my depart-

ment. For this purpose, General Hamilton had my permission to come to Trenton, and I certainly had a right to give it.

Mr. Adams, for reasons best known to himself, endeavors to represent General Hamilton as a man without fair pretensions to sound judgments or useful talents, a visionary politician consumed by indelicate pleasures and a censurable ambition. Far be it from me to attempt to palliate pleasures, the indulgence in which Mr. Hamilton himself publicly lamented. Has Mr. Adams the magnanimity to acknowledge his early or his later failings? Is he sure that his own judgment and genius can stand a comparison with Hamilton's, or will leave behind them to posterity as useful results? Were their respective literary productions to be examined in the court of criticism, which, think you, would obtain most suffrages, — those wearisome accounts of governments ancient and modern, that cold collection of other men's thoughts, "The Defence of the American Constitutions," or those well-sustained papers in the "Federalist," known to be written by Hamilton? In his diplomatic correspondence, we meet with nothing beyond the reach of an ordinary mind, and with follies into which an ordinary mind would never fall. Can aught found in these letters be drawn into competition with Hamilton's reports to Congress on the most important branches of finance and legislation, — those prescient measures, without a single exception, such as an enlightened people should have clung to and perpetuated? As to their minds abstractedly considered, Hamilton's was profound, penetrating, and invariably sound, and his genius of that rare kind which enlightens the judgment without misleading it; the mind of Mr. Adams, like the last glimmering of a lamp, feeble, wavering, and unsteady, with occasionally a strong flash of light, his genius little, and that little insufficient to irradiate his judgment.

This letter has grown to too great a length. I have more to say, but it would be tiresome to extend it further. It might also be useless, for in a few passing years the eighteen letters will perhaps be neither read nor remembered.

I am, dear sir, now and always,

Your sincere and affectionate friend, JAMES McHENRY.

The mischief of Mr. Adams's treatment of his secretaries seems to have impressed Mr. Cabot much more strongly than it did the other party leaders. Colonel Pickering, for

example, regarded it apparently as a mere wanton insult; and he dwelt upon it as a circumstance which relieved him from all responsibility, and ought therefore, in justice to himself, to be generally known. Mr. Cabot, on the other hand, saw clearly that by it the safety, indeed the very existence, of the party was menaced, and that the evils necessarily resulting from such difficulties would be thereby increased tenfold.

Indeed, so great was the importance which he attached to this breach between the President and the secretaries, that, after the first access of disappointment on hearing of Murray's nomination, it excluded even the fears awakened by the sudden reversal of his own most cherished policy. In a letter to Colonel Pickering, Mr. Cabot says: —

"I feel more apprehension of mischiefs which are yet to arise from the same cause that produced the nomination of Mr. Murray than from the nomination itself. I perceive that a dangerous division of the supporters of the government *may* take place," &c.[1]

Again he says, in the same letter: —

"There seems to be no ground for expecting consistency in our administration, while the false and dangerous dogma is maintained that the President is to decide upon great national measures without first availing himself of the fullest information and judgment of others. No man could be safely trusted that should practise upon this vain idea. The greatest men and the best governments have been those who have known how to profit most by the talents of others."[2]

In a letter to Mr. Gore, he observes: —

"A just sentiment of personal dignity and official independence would be satisfied to act rightly, after having heard all that could be said by those it might consult. The truest greatness is that which knows best how to avail itself of the best talents of others. It is sufficient that a man is superior to menace or entreaty, and that after hearing his counsellors he should feel superior to personal influence, but never to the authority of reason and truth."[3]

[1] See p. 226. [2] See p. 227. [3] See p. 231.

From these extracts, it is evident that the event most dreaded by Mr. Cabot was a division in the party so incurable that it could lead only to destruction. From this feeling, he suppressed a series of papers which he had prepared for publication, because he feared that the strictures on the French policy reflected on the President. He also urged upon his friends the adoption of a similar course.

In a letter to Colonel Pickering, he says: —

"I have always objected to those newspaper discussions which must necessarily implicate the President, and I think some humiliation ought to be submitted to rather than depart from this salutary respect; but I fear the mistaken zeal of personal friends will finally draw out those who think they act upon the broadest principles of the public good." [1]

Mr. Cabot appreciated the "dictatorial" temper of the Federalists, he perceived how dangerous the "rivalry" among the leaders was, and he therefore strove to assuage as far as he could the violence of the feelings which had been generated. From such motives as well as on general principles, he strenuously opposed Colonel Pickering's theory, that the Senate ought to interfere with a nomination because it was the precursor of a policy they disliked. On the other side, Mr. Cabot feared the influence of Mr. Adams's harsh speeches directed against all who differed from him in opinion; and he especially dreaded the course pursued by Mr. Adams's personal partisans. He believed, and rightly, that the truest and best supporters of the President were to be found now, as formerly, among those men who were at the moment opposed to the French mission. In short, Mr. Cabot, bitterly as he disliked the new French policy, wished to heal the wounds that had been inflicted, and to hold the party together, even at the expense of personal sacrifices. He saw in the Federalists the best and wisest defenders of order and good government, and esteemed their political ascendancy too highly to be willing to risk its continuance through a difference of opinion on any single point.

[1] See p. 226.

Such a hope was vain from the characters of the principal men engaged in the contest. To Hamilton has usually been attributed the deadly hostility which finally ruined Mr. Adams and the party; but Hamilton came upon the scene only at the last moment. A much more reckless enemy than Hamilton had already made the tragic *dénouement* inevitable. Colonel Pickering was at first, and for some time continued to be, the real leader in the opposition to the President. Bold, ambitious, determined, Colonel Pickering had come to believe himself master of the party and of the administration. He awoke suddenly to the consciousness of defeat and humiliation, and from that moment his one thought was to destroy the President. By highly abusive letters scattered broadcast through the land, he endeavored to inflame all the leading Federalists with the same personal resentment toward the President that he himself felt. Unluckily, he found ready listeners; and, still more unluckily, Mr. Adams greatly assisted the benevolent objects of his secretary. Colonel Pickering's attacks were soon brought to the President's ears, and he retorted by sweeping condemnations of all who opposed him. Both Colonel Pickering and Mr. Adams were, like most of the New England Federalists, given over to the belief that all who differed from them in opinion were little less than criminals and traitors. There was a healthy Puritan spirit about such a condition of mind, but it did not conduce to the pacification of party dissensions; and, with two such combatants fighting, it became difficult to maintain general harmony. Men whom Colonel Pickering's own appeals could not rouse were stung by the accusations of being a "British faction." There was nothing Mr. Cabot more dreaded than the revival of this old and bitter cry; for it was one which aroused the worst passions on all sides, and shut the door on peace. Those upon whom Mr. Adams was said to fix the name were men who had fought through the Revolution, and who had dragged the country out of the sloughs

of the Confederacy. It had been applied to the same men years before, by Mr. Jefferson; and the persons then attacked had keenly felt all the bitter injustice of the charge. Loose accusations of treason do immeasurable harm, and no good: they lower party warfare to a mere interchange of abuse; and in this case, as in all others, they were productive of the greatest disasters. Mr. Cabot clearly foresaw the evils of such venomous attacks, which he attributed to Gerry and to the little knot of men of similar capacity, who were at that moment the President's most noisy and violent supporters. Thus it happened that every one added fuel to the already hot fire, and in rousing the bitterest animosities Colonel Pickering proved only too successful. Those whom he could not personally influence were affected by the retorts which his assaults drew from the President.

Thus, with matters growing steadily worse for the Federalists, the spring and summer of 1799 passed away. The war party put every engine in motion to influence and restrain the President. Through every channel, they sought to dissuade him from his project; but they merely excited still further a naturally jealous temperament, and effected nothing. No one of them apparently perceived that the policy was too obviously wise to be abandoned, and that all attempts to block proceedings simply made a bad business worse.[1] A temporary suspension of the mission gave a gleam of hope that they might succeed, but at the last moment the President despatched the envoys without a word to any one. It was but a repetition of the old story. Mr. Adams, confident that he was right, persisted in his policy; and we must admire his constancy, judgment, and

[1] McHenry and Stoddert both claim that, after the policy was decided, the only wish of the cabinet was to suspend the mission. This proves that there was not that organized, united resistance in the cabinet at Trenton which Mr. Adams imagined he perceived; but I feel convinced that Pickering, at least, did not until the last moment abandon his efforts to wholly defeat the despatch of the commission, and that he also believed himself master of the whole cabinet.

patriotism. But he did the right thing in such a wrong way, he displayed so little address, so little regard for the feelings or opinions of others, that he alienated all and conciliated none. On the other side was Pickering raging at the President, and determined to crush him at all hazards. One leader after another was drawn into the fight; and the Federalist party entered upon the new century with a Presidential election before them, and distracted by the deepest and bitterest animosities. The prospect was not cheering, nor were its sinister auguries belied in the events which followed.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

(*Private.*)

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 4, 1799.

DEAR SIR, — I enclose you two pamphlets: one, of Mr. Gerry's communication, to which Skipwith's are annexed; the other my report upon them, in which I was naturally led to bring into view some things before made public.

I was mortified that some remarks on Gerry's conduct and opinions were excluded: you will be at no loss to account for this exclusion. The enclosed paper will show you how the report stood when it went from my hands. I was not *solicitous*, however, for retaining any other passages than those noted as I., K., and M., on pages 15, 17, and 19. I proposed a substitute for "5. Because, &c.," to this effect: "5. Because Mr. Gerry has expressed his opinion 'that before the arrival of the despatches of the envoys the minister appeared to him sincere, and anxious to obtain a reconciliation,' — an opinion which a candid examination of those despatches, and of his own correspondence, will show to be erroneous;" but I could not prevail. It was this unfounded but dangerous opinion which first induced me to think of making a report. I more than ever regret the *exclusions*, since you inform me of the "chilling fogs of Gerryism." But, now that his silly budget is before the public, he is fair game for the attack of every man of discernment who feels his *country* dishonored by the folly and perverseness of that "make-weight."

Either you or Mr. Higginson have written me a few weeks since about the President's speech, in that part which relates to

the sending another ambassador to France. *We* were anxious that it should have a different form; *we* wished it to be peremptory, *not to send another;* and we are unanimously of that opinion, but —. My only hope now is that despots will have too much pride to give a direct and official assurance that a minister shall be received, &c.; and on the conditions explicitly mentioned which a negotiation must embrace, but which they will have no desire to concede. But, those fellows are so debased by gains, I am not very sanguine that they will not stoop to any measure which may authorize the expectation of *negotiating*, in order to prevent our placing ourselves in a more warlike attitude. We shall not be safe until we assume that posture. A treaty, if considered on terms perfectly agreeable to us, would not give us security, — nay, the more satisfactory to us, the more likely to be broken by the "Great Nation," whose government would easily find a pretext. In the summer of 1797, the Portuguese minister had paid his money and concluded a treaty, which was drawn out *ready for signature;* but the next morning the Directory required new conditions, and because D'Arunjo refused to comply, he was ordered to leave France. He went to the Hague, and related the fact to Mr. Murray.

I must beg you to make my apology to Mr. Higginson — and one is due to you also — for several letters which remain unanswered. I really want time.

Believe me very sincerely yours, T. PICKERING.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

(*Private.*)

BROOKLINE, Feb. 14, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR, — Your favor of the 4th was handed me last evening, and though the pamphlets do not accompany it, yet this was the less to be regretted, because I have read over again and again and again the excellent report of the Secretary of State on French affairs, which you were so kind as to enclose to me on the day of its publication.

I had suspected that the "Lover of Truth" would be restrained from telling all he knew, and from exciting *all* our just sentiments by freely expressing his own. I think, however, his task has been well performed, and that he has effectually dispelled the fogs which chilled the *upper* part of our atmosphere. I think it impossible for any man of common sense to avoid seeing that Gerry is too great a fool to have been employed by a wise government in a

business of so much consequence. Moderate men feel themselves compelled to admit that he cannot be acquitted of criminality but at the entire expense of his understanding. But, although public opinion cannot be misled concerning his merits, it is feared that his conduct has already produced essential mischief. It is apprehended that those who have had too strong a desire to vindicate Mr. Gerry have necessarily adopted his inconsistency. How are we to understand the practicability of a safe, pacific system of intercourse with those whose object is universal domination, and whose means are *fraud* and *perfidy* as well as force? The spirit of our country was once so depressed that every thing was to be feared, but the transactions of the last year had lighted up a hopeful fire which promised a perennial and salutary warmth. From the commencement of our present session of Congress, the ardor of our citizens has been damped to a degree that threatened the return of our former dangers. I hope we are again recovering, but the proper temper of the nation cannot be revived without new and open outrages on the part of France. So dangerous is it to check the spirit of a just indignation, which was given to man to guard him against the insolence and tyranny of his fellows. I regret this falling off the more, because it will sink our reputation abroad; and reputation is power. The statesmen of Europe will take back a little of the praise they have lately given us: they will say we are still duped by the French. This is the more cruel, as it will be applied where it is undeserved. I think you ought to have nerves of iron; and I believe you have, or you would be wearied to death with the labors and perplexities of your office, which are created by *domestic* caprice as well as foreign intrigue and injustice. Mr. Higginson, Judge Dana,[1] and I were lately conversing on these topics, and we agreed that you must be fortified against every event, and by all means be induced to persevere as well to *perfect* your own fame as to save the country.

Yours faithfully and affectionately, GEORGE CABOT.

You make an acknowledgment of some epistolary obligation, which I reject, and once for all absolve you from any claims I may have had, or shall have, except only where I *expressly* make them, or where you suppose I can render you service.

[1] Francis Dana, judge of the Supreme Court, and afterwards chief justice of Massachusetts.

Cabot to Pickering.

Brookline, Feb. 15, 1799.

My dear Sir, — Undoubtedly you have read the speech and answers at the opening of the session of our Legislature. Governor Sumner acts upon the best principles of Federalism. He evidently *seconds* the policy and views of the national executive, and in this spirit he adopted a style less firm and decisive than his own sentiments. Both branches of the Legislature *without concert* were impressed with the idea that the government had not held a language suited to the times, or in unison with the public sentiment; and in their answers they raise the tone as much as they can with propriety, and guard against the depression of the public pulse. Had the President taken the high ground which was expected, no man would more readily or faithfully support it than Governor Sumner.

By these proceedings, as well as by the stern and sharp reproof given to the seditious Virginians, you will see that the people here are better than the national government; and it cannot be sufficiently regretted that this excellent temper, which was excited by the Federal administration, may subside for want of a proper nutriment from the same source. It was expected by all good men that the chief magistrate would have aimed principally to show the people the danger of trusting to the appearance of moderation in the tyrants of France, and to have proved that we have much more to fear from arts of this sort than from their arms. If he had reminded us that "the tiger always crouches before he leaps upon his prey," every tongue would have repeated the expression, and every heart responded to the just caution which it teaches.

I think you will derive pleasure from reading the resolutions of our Legislature in answer to those of Virginia.[1] If they contain some little inaccuracies, they are strong upon the whole, and must tend to support the orthodox party in that State. These resolutions had only one member negative in the Senate, and one-fifth of the House. Perhaps a greater unanimity is hardly to be desired; for I am persuaded that a majority of the best men would either

[1] These were the famous nullification resolutions drawn by Madison. The stronger ones from Kentucky, of the same import, were the work of Jefferson, who, being then Vice-President of the United States, was at the bottom of the whole business.

be inactive, or act ill, if they had no opposers to stimulate them and to criticise with severity whatever they do. Farewell.

Yours truly, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, Feb. 21, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR, — When the French government threatened to ravage our coasts with their cruisers from the West Indies, they believed the hand of our government was so tied up by faction that no resistance could be made; but, as soon as they saw our intercourse and naval armament bills had passed, they were sensible their colonists might be driven to despair, and the colonies finally *lost to them*. The French have been the wisest as well as wickedest politicians in the world; they have been remarkable for adapting their measures to the character of the people, and above all for profiting by their vices. They consider us as mercenary to excess, and a review of their proceedings would prove that they expected to establish an influence over us by constantly addressing our avarice. A nation may be so addicted to commerce and the arts of procuring property as to be insensible to every other sentiment. Such a condition would be extremely deplorable, and is only to be avoided by cultivating a love of glory as a balance. All the expenses of British wars are a thousand times remunerated to that nation by the preservation of their high spirit and character. Instead of a free, gallant, and generous people, as they now are, an uninterrupted peace would in fifty years have sunk them to the level of sordid, defenceless Jews. It is chiefly on the sea, however, that the English prowess is tried; yet this has been sufficient to display virtues and talents, the fame and reward of which are found to be *worth more than much money*. In our country, the commercial spirit must predominate; and there are reasons peculiar to our society why the love of wealth should be a stronger passion than in the societies of the Old World. As this cannot be prevented, it should be consulted and provided for as much as possible in all our political arrangements. It was with a reference to this idea that I expressed formerly a hope that the government would have declared war in this session, or at any rate would cut off all personal intercourse with the French territories, and especially would authorize the citizens of the United States to make reprisals upon French

property of every description. Such a measure could have added nothing to our difficulties, but must have been attended with many and great advantages. Avarice would have fought our battles, and would train up innumerable defenders of the country; and a love of glory and spirit of patriotism would have grown upon the love of gain. But I have feared that, in the awkward and indefinite state we are now placed, our adventurous spirits will be tempted to seek for the means of gratifying themselves in the evasions of our laws, and administering to the necessities of our enemy. I am recently impressed with these apprehensions more deeply than before, because I see the prices of provisions are rising high in the French islands, and French letters of marque begin to appear in the West Indies, which will be employed in taking our commodities from the Danish islands; and because the news agent at Guadaloupe has undoubtedly come out to amuse us with some show of moderation, while he in fact concerts measures with the Gallo-Americans to supply the French colonies. Nothing can be more evident than the permanent substantial benefits which would accrue to the United States from the independence of the West India islands, which may result from our withholding supplies; but, at any rate, whether this happens or not, our enemy is so extremely vulnerable in that scene, that we must be stupid or worse if we do not make him feel our power. As I have not seen the new intercourse bill, I am uninformed of the power it vests in the President; but it is little short of betraying the country, if the legislature do not give authority to capture all French property, and all American property employed in French trade.

The friends of Barney[1] are still in the great flour cities, and some of them in the government. They were willing to sacrifice the peace of the country in 1794 to their private interests, and they will now be willing to sacrifice its honor. But it is time to speak plainly upon these subjects; and it is the duty of those who conduct

[1] Captain, afterwards Commodore, Joshua Barney, of Baltimore. He was a most violent Jacobin and French sympathizer. In 1794, he went with Monroe as bearer of an American flag to France; and at the reception of the latter he presented his flag, received a French one in exchange, and made a speech on the occasion. For this service, he was given and accepted a commission as captain in the French navy, in which capacity he served for several years. The reference here is to the extensive evasion of the non-intercourse acts by smuggling provisions from Baltimore to the French islands.

our national affairs to destroy, if possible, every project for supplying the dependencies of France. You will please to remember that I have expressly renounced all claim to answers, and therefore I have been less reluctant to write.

With unfeigned esteem, I remain yours, &c., G. C.

Pickering to Cabot.

(*Private.*)

Philadelphia, Feb. 21, 1799.

My dear Sir, — You will be shocked, as we all were, by the President's nomination of Mr. Murray minister plenipotentiary to negotiate a treaty with the French republic. I beg you to believe that it is the sole act of the President. Not one officer about him had any knowledge of his design. He has learned that all his friends and the friends of his country are mortified and disgusted, and he is now suffering the pains of purgatory. This would be well enough; but how is the country to be retrieved from the calamitous consequences? How is its honor thus prostrated in the dust to be recovered? It has already damned one measure calculated to invigorate the spirit and enterprise of our navy. The bill for granting a bounty on every gun taken was yesterday lost in the House, fifty-two to forty-eight.

The nomination is committed in the Senate to a committee, consisting of Sedgwick, Stockton, Read, Bingham, and Ross.[1] You would suppose that all these might be depended on in every Federal question except Bingham. Unfortunately, Ross is candidate for governor of Pennsylvania, — the election will be made next October, — and lately has become what you Yankees call *peoplish.* The committee will study to invent some change by which the measure may be rendered less mischievous; but the President's character can never be retrieved. He cannot recover the confidence of the Federalists. The citizens are astonished, and many would not believe it possible. This reminds me of "Porcupine's"[2]

[1] Theodore Sedgwick, senator from Massachusetts, and afterwards judge of the Supreme Court of that State. Richard Stockton, son of the signer of the same name, and senator from New Jersey. Jacob Read, general in the war of Independence, senator from South Carolina, and afterwards United States judge of the Supreme Court of that State. William Bingham and James Ross were the senators from Pennsylvania.

[2] William Cobbett's *nom de plume.*

neat but cutting satire of yesterday: it is enclosed. If any thing could gall him more, it is that the serpents of the "Aurora" are daily slavering him with their praise.

Adieu, my dear friend. Bad as things are, I will not yet despair.

T. PICKERING.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, Feb. 22, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR, — I sincerely thank you for the kind intentions which are sufficiently manifest, notwithstanding your willingness to disguise them, in your letter of the 12th.

I am grieved to hear you complain of the weight of duty which I have often feared might become intolerable to you. I pray for your own sake, but still more for the public, that you may neither be disabled nor discouraged. I speak with sincerity of the public, because I see nowhere a man to fill the place. For yourself, the only adequate motive is that honest fame which is the just reward of the greatest and most difficult services. I have sometimes hoped that time, which accommodates us to our burdens, would have reconciled you to yours, and that the sensibility, which wastes human strength like a hectic fever, would become less exquisite; but, if you are compelled to sacrifice your health or quit your office at last, there can be no doubt of the option you ought to make. In any event, you will doubtless take no step without the *utmost deliberation*, nor without first ascertaining the position of comfortable ease which you are to take, and which must be always completely in your power to secure. I have a great deal to say on this subject, but you would think I had already said too much, if you did not know the great interest I take in your happiness. I agree with you fully on the importance of an *established* right to trade freely with any of the principal islands, but to secure this we must perhaps forbear to supply them until their dependence on the Jacobin parent is entirely destroyed. I should think, too, that the English must be consulted, and that without a perfect concert there would be no safety in the system, for indeed the occurrence is produced by their arms. I have always apprehended that our money-loving people would be apt to supply the French colonies, notwithstanding your prohibitory laws. You ought to go one step further; and, if you cannot declare war, you ought never-

theless to authorize indiscriminate reprisals on French property, and prohibit personal intercourse. It is as singular as it is humiliating that, while the French capture our property *ad libitum*, and have done it for years, we restrain our citizens from retaliating. It has appeared to me the path of policy is so plain that it cannot be mistaken, and nothing but the foulest traitorism and faction can prevent its being pursued. General reprisals would instantly increase the number, and still more the force, of private vessels of war. Avarice would fight our battles, and would train innumerable sea soldiers to defend our coasts against invaders, if they ever come, and give us weight and respect among the maritime nations, if they should not. The incidents of active war would every day interest the feelings of the community, and destroy that apathy which has been so dangerous; and by driving away Frenchmen, and forbidding personal intercourse between the countries, the ducts of corruption would be principally cut off. It is time to say openly what I have said these five years, that the Revolutionary monster that has arisen in France must be destroyed, or it will never cease to destroy others. These opinions, indeed, are extensively embraced now.

I repeat that you are not to write to me, unless I expressly request it, or you have commands of your own to give; but, as I am still called to preach political sermons to occasional auditors, I wish in future you would send me *annually* the report of the Secretary of the Treasury, which gives a view of the exports and imports. I have not seen one these several years.

Yours truly, G. CABOT.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 26, 1799.

DEAR SIR, — The President, finding that Mr. Murray would be negatived, or finally impressed with the importance of yielding to the public sentiment (by which I mean the sentiment of the real friends of the country, and supporters of his administration), yesterday morning sent in a new nomination, — Chief Justice Ellsworth, Patrick Henry, and Mr. Murray; the two former not to leave America until they receive assurances from the French government that they will be received. And as this is the amelioration which was desired as the best palliative of the evil of any nomination,

and for the purpose of treating with France, Ellsworth being here, I presume he was consulted, and consented to the nomination from the necessity of preventing a greater evil. Patrick Henry probably will decline.

I have received your letter of the 15th. You, Governor Sumner, and other men to whom you refer, have seen and lamented the falling off in the President's speech at the opening of this session of Congress. We endeavored to raise its tone respecting France, but were *repelled*. The nomination of Murray was in the spirit of that part of the speech to which I refer. Perhaps I may find hereafter an opportunity of giving further information to you on this subject. I am very truly yours, T. PICKERING.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

(*Private.*)

BROOKLINE, March 7, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR, — I received in course your favors of the 21st and 26th ult., and with the latter a packet of seeds which shall be tried in our soils.

Indignation, grief, and disgust, in a rotatory succession, are the only sentiments excited by the nomination of Mr. Murray in the breasts of well-informed, decided Federalists. The half-informed and the feeble see no harm in any measure which professes to have peace for its object; and they will not listen to the painful proofs that a *safe* peace, which they truly desire, is rendered less attainable by this new evidence of *our* weakness and this new encouragement to *French artifice;* while the temporizers, trimmers, and Federal hypocrites with Jacobin hearts, rejoice in an opportunity to throw off the mask, and under sanction of a great name oppose that system of national dignity and defence which they had reluctantly supported because it had become popular.

The modification which the business has undergone removes the objection of incompetency in the negotiator, but the pernicious consequences of leading the public mind to negotiation instead of resistance are not abated. I have thought it a duty to inculcate the idea that we should have nothing to dread from France, if we could but realize the *extent* of her designs and the *means* by which she expected to accomplish them; and I thought I was serving the government when I insisted that all the affected moderation and

crouching of the French was only a trick to soothe our resentments and lull us into a fatal security. The wrecks of European States, who were beguiled from their true course by the false lights which France had hung out, ought to warn us of the danger of following them; but it would seem as if States cannot profit by the examples of others, nor even by their own experience. It has been frequently remarked that for several years our distance from Europe had saved us from a participation in its calamities, and had given us opportunity to learn wisdom at their expense; and it has been observed, with some pride and great joy, that finally our people (a majority) had acquired such just ideas of the national policy as to approve and support it at every expense and every hazard. If this was the case, the blessing is in great jeopardy, if not absolutely lost; for it is to be feared that a new division of the country is this moment forming, by which the men who have heretofore devised and supported the national measures will be the minority.

You will see by the paragraphs in the Boston papers that the presses there have been attended to by those who are strongly attached to the President *personally*, or who approve these half-way measures which lead to whole ruin. Immediately after the first intelligence was received, I penned a paragraph for the next day's "Centinel," expressing doubts of the truth of the intelligence, because it was contrary to the *avowed* policy of the President, and because the assurances said to have been given by France could now deceive no one, as all the world knew the sole design of such professions must be to facilitate their destructive designs, &c. I am not sure the paragraph arrived at the printing-office; but, if it did, it was rejected. I then wrote a little piece, certainly unexceptionable in form, showing the manner in which the Greeks were amused by negotiations, till their liberties were destroyed by Philip, &c. But this, which was sent to the "Mercury" office, was refused, although its publication was particularly requested, and although I have formerly written a number of pieces for that paper which they valued so highly as to send me repeated solicitations for more. Thus you see already the seeds of division vegetate. I have not been in town; but I know many of the best men feel extreme chagrin, and doubtless would be more open in expressing it, if they did not consult the public welfare more than their own personal gratifications.

I have always objected to those newspaper discussions which

must necessarily implicate the President, and I think some humiliation ought to be submitted to rather than depart from this salutary respect; but I fear the mistaken zeal of personal friends will finally draw out those who think they act upon the broadest principles of the public good.

I rejoice extremely to find Ross acting with firmness. I always esteemed him highly, and I know of few things in life more unpleasant than being obliged to renounce or abate a favorable opinion of a friend. With unfeigned esteem and affection,

I remain as ever yours, GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, March 18, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR, — Although I have neither faith nor hope myself, yet it is possible we must be all subject to the evils of negotiation with the present regency of France. I fulfil a duty, therefore, in transmitting you Mr. Gore's letter[1] which relates to it. From our newspapers as well as from other sources, you will receive information of the schisms created among Federalists by the unaccountable conduct of the President. I have been once in town; and I *met* no man who did not censure the President extremely, though they differed much as to the expediency of declaring it. But I *heard* of many, and they were such as might be expected to do so, who insisted on the propriety of our justifying what had been done, and of denouncing whomsoever should dare to do otherwise. *Personal* friends of the President, temporizing men, with real Jacobins who profess Federalism, have been active and zealous; while the open, avowed Jacobins have been somewhat at a stop, and for a time said but little. Taking a retrospect from the point at which we now stand, I feel more apprehension of mischiefs which are yet to arise from the same cause that produced the nomination of Mr. Murray than from the nomination itself. I perceive that a dangerous division of the supporters of government *may* take place, by which the men who act on truly public principles will be opposed by many who have hitherto followed them, and that these will be necessarily countenanced by the President. Should this happen, the animosity to England, which is still popular, will be resorted to; and we shall be told that the President is

[1] This letter is printed in the previous chapter. See p. 186.

calumniated, because he will not yield to a British faction, &c. It seems to me that the late transactions must operate unfavorably on the discussions which are taking place between you and Great Britain, respecting the commission at Philadelphia, and on the business of the commissioners in London. I had an hour's conversation with Mr. Liston at Boston, which satisfied me that *he* was disposed to smooth every unavoidable difficulty between the two countries, confiding that our government would, as far as possible, keep the United States out of the fangs of France, and thus at last become independent and free of French influence. I found he was perfectly satisfied with *your* sentiments and principles, and he declared to me that he had not a wish to embarrass us with any engagements which you would not approve. Indeed, he said expressly to me that he was pleased with General Marshall's opinions published on this subject.

I ran over several topics with Mr. Liston, in which he professed to agree with me, and especially that we have great *common* interests which ought to keep us friends in spite of all the irritations which from various causes must arise for a time. But I cannot refrain from suggesting to you the utility of impressing him now with the importance of acting conformably to those sentiments, by which he will certainly serve his own country no less than ours. We have so many men who seek for a quarrel with Great Britain, that no ordinary skill can prevent it, unless that nation, laying aside a little of its haughtiness, will faithfully and generously accommodate its policy to the nature and character of our government. Our system must occasionally yield to the errors and prejudices of the people, and if it were always to be administered by the best men in the world, still it would be less stable than theirs; and therefore *political duty*—that is, *true interest*—requires that they should be sufficiently flexible to prevent that discord which is constantly aimed at by the bitter enemies of both. Be all this as it may, there seems to be no ground for expecting consistency in our administration, while the false and dangerous dogma is maintained that the President is to decide upon great national measures without first availing himself of the fullest information and judgment of others. No man could be safely trusted that should practise upon this vain idea. The greatest men and the best governments have been those who have known how to profit most by the talents of others. Henry IV.'s greatest glory, in my opinion, consists

in having known how to appreciate the character of Sully; and the British administration would not have existed for a month, still less to astonish the world by its constancy and its energies, if the king did not steadily pursue the course pointed out by those whose abilities he employs in his council. It is enough that the chief magistrate is superior to all *personal* influence, whether of menace or entreaty; that he is superior to the influence of every authority but that of reason well informed. But that dignity and independence should require a man to act in the most important concerns without the aid of counsel from others is the error of vanity which the populace alone ought to indulge. The power of displacing all officers whom the President is expected to consult is surely sufficient to preserve his spirit of independence; and he need not be afraid to examine their investigations, hear their discussions, or consider their results. If their power force a conviction, he ought to yield to it; if not, he is at liberty to discard it, and to act a part which shall seem to him better. This is my idea of dignity, and this is the way to avoid mistakes. This is the secret of Washington's greatness. I am sensible it is as delicate as it is difficult to make the arrangement I long since intimated, by which it should be understood that the President would habitually *hear his servants* before he decides upon their tasks, and that when he is absent from them he would refrain from all business.

Your faithful friend, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, May 2, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR. — Soon after the return of the President, I visited him at Quincy, where I was hospitably entertained at dinner with the family. It was the wish of several of my friends that I should discharge the friendly duty of disclosing such facts and sentiments as were known and felt by the best public men here, and which might be useful to him. It was particularly desired that he should be informed of the insincerity of men who, under the mask of patriotism, inflame his jealousy of his best friends and the best friends of the country. But, though I was treated with great cordiality and confidence on many subjects, a studied course kept us distant from those on which I should have spoken freely, if permitted, though with great pain to myself. In

a late letter from Mr. Gore, he intimates to me that if the government should find it necessary to appoint a *minister plenipotentiary* for St. Petersburg or Constantinople, or any other court, at the time of his present employment being ended, and he should be thought a suitable person to serve the country in *that character*, he would undertake it. I have written to Mr. Gore that I should take the liberty to mention his name to you and to Mr. Wolcott, and that I would also communicate his idea to the President, if an opportunity occurred, which I do not suppose probable. I think it unnecessary to speak of Mr. Gore's qualifications or pretensions, all which must be well known to you; and I think it cannot be unknown to the President that he has applied his talents and devoted his studies to politics almost exclusively these ten years past. You have seen the discussions in our papers under the "Envoys," written by Otis, and other paragraphs by other persons concerning the President's nomination of Mr. Murray. I think, however, you may be assured that sensible men very generally condemn that measure, and chiefly differ as to the expediency of expressing their censures publicly.

With the highest esteem and unabating attachment, I remain

Your affectionate and faithful friend,

GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, May 2, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR, — I fulfil my own inclination as well as promise in mentioning to you that Mr. Gore, one of our commissioners in London, at the expiration of his present service would willingly go to Constantinople or St. Petersburg or any other court, as minister plenipotentiary, if the government should need a person for such an employment and should think him capable of serving them acceptably. Mr. Gore has formed himself for such an office by assiduous study and attention for ten years, and would certainly be well received anywhere, and, I think, could not fail to advance the reasonable views of the government. The Jacobins have lately become more systematical, I think, in their electioneering projects, and have in this part of the country availed themselves greatly of those momentary discontents which naturally follow the promulgation of a new tax. We are taking some pains, however,

to keep the people steady; and I hope with a majority these labors will succeed.

On a late visit to Quincy, I was treated with cordial hospitality and with some confidence; but I was studiously (as I thought) prevented from speaking on those topics which so much engage public attention. I performed a duty in attempting it, and saved myself great pain in being defeated. General Knox tells the President he has many good men about him, — men of wise heads and honest hearts, — but they are of a sort that will raise insurrection, if some of them be not dismissed. He only named Tench Francis, but it is easy to fill up his list. I wish he would name all himself, and describe their faults. Doubtless the public would highly commend much of that conduct he condemns.

Your affectionate and faithful friend,

GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO GORE.

MAY 2, 1799.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — If acknowledgments of debt would discharge obligation, I should write a long letter of acknowledgments. The particular subject of your letter of the 26th of January had often occurred to me, and some friends with whom I converse about you. We had presumed the employment would be agreeable, and we knew the honor of it was merited. If my wishes had power, you would be gratified. I shall write to Mr. Wolcott and Mr. Pickering[1] concerning it; and, if I can directly or indirectly communicate it to the President in a manner likely to promote your views, I shall certainly do it.

I rejoice that the President's speech was so much approved by the good people on your side the water, but they certainly praise it at the expense of our country. The spirit of that speech was less elevated than the spirit of reflecting men through the nation, and its effect has been to depress them: if, however, this had been all, it would have been tolerable; but it is to be lamented that the affected moderation of that speech was to supply by authority what was wanted in argument, — to silence the offensive remonstrants against Gerryism, to open a way for soothing Jacobin spirits, to provide for something like a support against the dictatorial temper

[1] This promise was fulfilled in the two preceding letters.

of high-minded Federalists, and to show that he could conduct the affairs of the nation without advisers, &c. Nothing can be more unfortunate for him and for the country than this course of thinking, as weak and false as it is vain and dangerous. A just sentiment of personal dignity and official independence would be satisfied to act rightly, after having heard all that could be said by those it might consult. The truest greatness is that which knows best how to avail itself of the best talents of others. It is sufficient that a man is superior to menace or entreaty, and that after hearing his counsellors he should feel superior to *personal* influence, but never to the authority of reason and truth. How many do wrong that they may differ from those whose opinions they wish to be thought not to respect!

I do not suspect that the President has in the smallest degree abated his detestation of French revolutionism. Nor do I doubt that the country pretty well understands its nature and its dangerous tendency toward us; but, as in other free states, the spirit of faction predominates over every thing. Rivalry among the Federalists generates opposition to those distinguished characters who might render us most service. Disappointed men oppose and calumniate them openly; and all the desperate adventurers who are uneasy with their present condition know that the poor we have always with us, and that these, with many of the ignorant, are easily formed into a revolutionary corps in every country. The jealousy of the rich is a passion in the poor, which can always be appealed to with success on every question, and instead of an answer to every argument. Time and experience will prove the fallacy of every theory of government which admits universal suffrage as a right, but our people will not be wise enough to apply a remedy voluntarily. Like other evils, therefore, it must be left to produce its own cure. So I preach, instead of replying directly to your inquiries about Congress, &c.

I have often wished you here to write books, because they would do much service in palliating and protracting evils which cannot be wholly averted. We all work a little; but your patience, perseverance, and mellifluence are extremely wanted.

May Heaven bless you. G. C.

CABOT TO GORE.

JUNE 9, 1799.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have by a former conveyance informed you that I had written to Mr. Pickering and Mr. Wolcott concerning a future destination, and I have no doubt they will promote your wishes, because they will in so doing serve the public. It is probable, however, that their influence will be much less than it ought to be, as they are suspected of enjoying more consideration in the community than consists with the respect *claimed* by another.

It has been a part of the cant of Democratic writers to ascribe to kings exclusively an undue love of praise, and to *subjects* the disgrace of giving it, however unmerited. Few kings I believe could be named, who swallowed grosser flattery than our Governor Hancock daily required and received from servile citizens. You recollect how entirely men of dignity and worth were excluded from his confidence, because they could not yield the adulation he desired. It must be unhappy for our country if ever a man of such character should be raised to the head of the Union.

I have received your favor of the 9th of March, with a copy of one of the 27th of February, the original of which has not come to hand. I am impatient to see the manuscript of which it speaks, not doubting it will be useful to the public, and at any rate to a part of that public. Be assured, if it reaches me, I will observe your directions, and pursue a course which shall best fulfil your wishes.

Notwithstanding your reasoning upon the nominations for Petersburg and the Porte,[1] I have no suspicion that there exists a disposition toward you particularly unfriendly. If I did, I would disclose it frankly. I shall, however, be able to ascertain the precise circumstances of those nominations in a month or two, and if there be any thing in them of importance you shall be informed.

It has often occurred to me that you and Mr. King would blame me much for the scanty information I give you of what passes on this side of the water, and especially that I should omit to explain why the United States remain in such an absurd state in relation

[1] Mr. King, minister to England, had been appointed to negotiate a treaty with Russia through the Russian minister at London. Mr. Smith, our minister at Lisbon, had been appointed to negotiate with the Porte. Thus Mr. Gore failed to obtain either of the employments for which he had expressed a desire.

to France. But the truth is that I have been discouraged from attempting to explain a course of conduct which, after it was commenced, has been guided by accident and caprice. If there was a system in the heads of the advisers, as I presume there was, it never has been fully adopted by the principal, or has been relaxed from jealousy. You know all that I do of the character of the agents, and you can easily conceive of the inconsistencies which they might produce. A jealousy of Pickering and Wolcott, and a resentment against all censurers of Gerry, have greatly diminished their influence; while men of another cast are naturally taken into favor, and their suggestions listened to. The old jealousy of Hamilton is revived with tenfold force; and even the raising an army, so essential to the protection of the government and country, is frowned upon by the President, because it may display Hamilton's greatness: so that we are not to be saved, lest the man most conspicuous in saving us should be called saviour. So I read our politics, but it is chiefly without book.

We are lamenting the death of Sumner,[1] whose loss is irreparable. Ames is one of the council to Lieutenant-Governor Gill, but whether he will be listened to I don't know.

Farewell. Yours, G. C.

Cabot to Pickering.

Brookline, July 8, 1799.

Dear Sir, — I transmit herewith a copy of Mr. Lowell's oration, which gave great pleasure to the auditory on Thursday. The President was particularly gratified with it, and declared his approbation of every sentiment except those which were complimentary to himself. I have been often told that you intended to make a visit to your *natale solum* in the course of this summer, but am now informed that you have relinquished the design. This, if true, will greatly disappoint *very many* here, and especially your affectionate friend, G. Cabot.

Cabot to Pickering.

Brookline, Sept. 5, 1799.

My dear Sir, — The letter directed to Mr. Lowell was delivered to him: he has long thought properly on the subject of government, and knows how to estimate the men who support our own.

[1] Hon. Increase Sumner, at that time Governor of Massachusetts.

It has been thought incredible that the United States should at this period renew their negotiations with France: it is not seen that any good can come of it, but much trouble may come, which might otherwise be avoided. It is mere *fastidiousness* to say we will negotiate because we have a right; it is Quixotism to suppose that we must exercise this right to prove that we possess it, or to prevent our forbearance from being imputed to fear. When our rights are questioned, they must be maintained at every hazard; but neither prudence nor honor requires us to provoke attacks.

A negotiation with France will necessarily excite the jealousy, if not the resentment, of the coalesced powers, who will say that they are fighting for us as well as themselves, and that the security and tranquillity we enjoy are the fruit of their efforts and the price of their blood; that it is a dishonorable traffic on our part, and but for their energies would soon appear to be unsafe; and, finally, that the disposition of the common enemy to treat with us at all arises wholly from the distress into which *they* have driven him, and that the end he proposes by it is *a recruit of means to annoy them*. If any ideas of this sort are entertained by the coalesced powers, they will feel exasperated at our conduct, and will lead us to dread *their* successes as much as we have dreaded those of France; for power, we well know, always engenders haughtiness, insolence, and injustice. It appears to me we have already as much misunderstanding with some of them as can be either borne or explained with good humor; and it is not easy to discover how we are to avoid downright quarrels, after new sources of irritation shall be opened.

There are very few men of information or reflection in this quarter who do not feel alarmed. Our preachers and orators almost universally have expressed a joy at the separation from France, and a confident hope that we should keep aloof from her influence, poisons, and plagues; and I certainly do not know one in twenty among the Federalists who thinks there is any apology for attempting to renew the intercourse in any shape.

A few men try to console themselves with the confidence they place in Mr. Ellsworth; but the evil is *negotiation*. If the disasters of the campaign are not mitigated by some successes to the arms of France, she will probably grant us every thing *in promises*; and the more she grants in this way, the more we shall be embarrassed by the measure, and finally gain nothing. But France will

gain a great deal. She will involve us in difficulties, and perhaps war with her enemies, and in that case will recover all her influence here; but without war she will gain a free access, which she now wants. You know my obstinate opinions upon the nature of *French* republicanism: it is a modification of the vilest and wickedest ambition the world has ever seen. I believe a small portion of numbers in France can be found who would not be glad to see the present system annihilated, and the old *régime* restored, or some sort of monarchy. I have no doubt such a change will take place sooner or later. If military events accelerate it, the new government in France will feel no partiality toward those who have *officiously and unnecessarily* attached themselves to the bloody usurpers, as the present regents will be called. This view of the subject makes the negotiation, at least, of doubtful policy, as regards the French nation. You see I cannot refrain from perplexing myself with affairs which are committed to better hands. But I will not tease you with all my conjectures or apprehensions. I pray Heaven to bless you, and, as our clergy express it, to preserve to you the spirit of your station.

Your affectionate and faithful friend, GEORGE CABOT.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

TRENTON, Sept. 13, 1799.

DEAR SIR, — This morning I received your favor of the 5th. Mr. Higginson had before written me on the same subject; and, for such information as I can give, I pray you to read my answer of yesterday to him, after which I wish the letter may be burnt.

In that answer, I have said that but for recent events, intending chiefly those in *France*, the attempt to divert the President from the negotiation could not have been made. After the first nomination of Mr. Murray, instead of rejecting the project absolutely, the supporters of government thought no remedy, or rather palliative, was practicable but the nominating of three commissioners in the place of one. The principle was, as I understood, that the Federalists had from the beginning declared that the Senate had no right to judge of a *measure* of the kind, but only of the *men* proposed to execute it. This principle, having been from the formation of the government advanced and advocated by the Federalists, could not, on the occasion of Murray's nomination, be departed

from without inconsistency. I have never deliberated on this point, but taken it up as I found it. I wish, however, that the stand had now been made. I wish the project of negotiating with France, such as she then was, had been peremptorily rejected, if a vote of rejection could have been obtained, of which there was at least some doubt; the weak and timid Federalists manifesting a disposition to join the antis for the sake of *peace*. The nomination of ambassadors and other foreign ministers seems to me different from the nomination of judges and other officers. Of the latter, the duty and the extent of their powers are prescribed by the known laws of the land, and therefore nothing remains for the Senate to judge of but the fitness or unfitness of the candidates for the offices to which they are nominated by the President. But, in foreign affairs, the Senate have a right of judging whether any and what special relations shall be formed with other sovereigns and states, the power of making treaties being vested in them in concurrence with the President.

And why not the *initiative* as well as the *concluding* power? Why not of deciding *beforehand* whether any connection should be formed, as *afterwards* whether the proposed terms and conditions of the connection are salutary or hostile to the interests of the United States? Why should the *perfect right* and *freedom* of judging in the Senate be *controlled* by an independent act of the President? Did not the Constitution intend to vest in the Senate the like independent power to reject treaties formed by the President, as to reject *bills* formed by the House of Representatives? In the latter case, have not the Senate a perfect right to *reject* as well because a bill is founded in an erroneous principle as for defective or *improvident provisions* in the enacting clauses? But is not the Senate foreclosed from judging of the *principle of a treaty*, by previously assenting to the nomination of ministers to negotiate it? And if afterwards they reject one, when the articles are adapted to the subjects treated on, will it not expose the country to the reproach of *bad faith*?

I remember to have read in the records of my office a report made to President Washington, in 1792, by Mr. Jefferson, of certain terms to be proposed in a treaty with Spain, and a submission of it to the Senate for their *previous* opinion and advice; and their opinion and advice were given.

As I have never before considered this subject, my reasoning

may be very wild and inconclusive. I must presume it is so, since the principle has been so long since discussed and settled by men from whom I place myself at a humble distance. But, if their construction is the only one of which the constitution will admit, it is time it was changed. From what I have heard of the President's opinion on this subject, I perceive that such a *previous* interposition of the Senate with their advice and opinion would be deemed as unwarrantable and unholy as it was for an unanointed priest to touch the Jewish ark.

I have this week sent to the President a draught of instructions to the envoys, as settled here with my colleagues. Pursuant to the President's orders, I at the same time sent the press copy of them to Mr. Ellsworth. This excellent man, when here in August, saw no alternative *but that he must go*. The subsequent changes in Europe, and especially in France, I think must change his ideas. I wish you would write him upon it, and propose his attempting to dissuade the President from the pursuit. I also will write him. There is nothing in politics he more detests than this mission, and nothing in nature he more dreads than the voyage across the wide Atlantic. Governor Davie[1] is evidently pleased with the business; but his letter to me was prior to the late arrivals from Europe. Is there no man near the President, whose opinion he will respect, believing it to be given sincerely for *his honor and glory*, as well as for his country's good?

My chief clerk has found the report of Mr. Jefferson, before mentioned; and I enclose the resolve which the Senate passed upon it the 16th of March, 1792. I feel myself obliged by all your communications, and pray you to continue them, being as sincerely as respectfully yours, TIMOTHY PICKERING.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, Sept. 22, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR, — As soon as I was made to believe that the new envoys were actually going to France, I sat down and penned the observations contained in the enclosed six numbers. My motive was solely to present to the President a view of the subject in the light in which it appeared to almost every man whose opinion he respected three years ago.

I did not however feel satisfied that it would not drag him before the public eye, by the discussions which it would excite. I there-

[1] Of North Carolina.

fore did not publish. When you have run them over, and, if you please, shewn them to our friend Mr. Wolcott, you may enclose them to me in a blank cover.

Your faithful friend, GEORGE CABOT.

I have this moment received your favor of the 13th, which I will answer by the next post.

A plain and perspicuous statement has been attempted of the few leading ideas which occur on the report of the day, that a new cargo of envoys is speedily to be shipped for France. Upon review of what is written, I confess there does not appear to me any sufficient motive for the publication, but, on the contrary, it may produce an unnecessary irritation. If any thing could be done at this hour, it must be by an able display of the subject, in a private letter to Ellsworth, which might engage him to expostulate strongly with the President, and refuse to go.

[*Memo. of passages from some papers of George Cabot, of Sept.* 22, 1799.]

Having described the character of the French government, he says: —

"With such a power, there ought to be no truce, and there can be no peace but at the expense of national honor and national safety. A peace with such a power is a bridge for an enemy to advance upon into the country he means to destroy."

"While France is governed by men, or principles such as have governed her for several years, we have only the option to be her 'enemies' or her 'slaves.'"

"The despatches of our envoys disclosed our dangers, and put an end to those delusions which had almost consummated our ruin." "The people were then made sensible that in vain we had drunk of the cup of humiliation to its very dregs. They saw the fatal error of Switzerland and other States, and were convinced that, under Providence, they must trust to their arms at last for the security of their most 'precious interests.' 'These interests,' the President has lately assured us, 'are *still* held in jeopardy by the *hostile designs* and *insidious arts* of a foreign nation.' — France. It is now a problem how a treaty can be made with France, which

will not be beneficial to her, and injurious, *or at best fruitless*, to the United States."

"From the nature and constitution of the revolutionary system, France is, and must continue, irreconcilably hostile to every independent State. If she stoops, she stoops only to conquer. She must aim at controlling by art and intrigue those whom her arms do not reach."

"France at this moment will grant us *in promises* whatever we should be likely to demand; yet, as she acknowledges no obligation but that of *physical force*, it is evident that whatever we concede must be in effect gratuitous. Should we give only the ordinary privileges of hospitality to her incendiaries, we should again see some part of our country on fire, if the present order of things in France is maintained. But if that order is annihilated, *as it probably will be in the hands of Frenchmen*, it may happen that the new government will not regard as friends those who have *officiously* and *unnecessarily* associated with their bloody tyrant usurpers, as the revolutionists may then be styled."

With respect to "the interests and feelings of the other great powers at war, it is true that, while we respect the rights of other nations, we are not accountable to them for the discretion with which we exercise our own. But we cannot be insensible that actions in themselves strictly lawful are often highly inexpedient. In the use of the clearest rights and in the preservation of unsullied honor, prudence guides the individual, and policy must guide the nation. In a contest like the present, where every thing is at stake, the sensibility of the combatants will be lively, their jealousy quick, and resentment strong. The coalesced powers feel — *what no one can deny* — that they are fighting the battles of every independent people as well as their own. It cannot be expected, therefore, that they would see the friendly overtures of any country, to the common enemy, without great emotions. It would be a new thing under the sun, if such a transaction should not engender distrust and give birth to every hostile sentiment."

[When the French legislature passed the law prohibiting the neutral powers to carry on any commerce with England, or, which was the same thing, declaring the produce and manufactures of the British good prize in neutral vessels, although the property of neutrals, and vessels and cargoes subject to confiscation, I thought that this outrage upon the rights of all nations

would have justified Great Britain in counteracting it by prohibiting the neutral nations to have any commerce with France, and enforcing the prohibition by the capture and confiscation of all vessels attempting to carry it on. — T. P.]

"Seventy millions of dollars, in a late letter addressed to the citizens of the United States, citizen Barlow[1] tells us have been taken from us by the French. Probably citizen Barlow exaggerates the account; but, however this may be, he hardly attempts to palliate the atrocity of this immense robbery, although he is the tool of the Directory; and yet to this moment we have not dared to make reprisals on French *property!* The restraining our captures to the *armed* vessels of France is a humiliation of our country which has been too long protracted already; and its continuance after Congress shall meet will be without excuse, unless we are in fact courting those whom we really detest, and whose friendship every good man dreads."

Cabot to Pickering.

Brookline, Sept. 23, 1799.

My dear Sir, — I very early turned my attention to the power of the Senate in the appointment of officers. I do not recollect that I ever thought the *terms* of the Constitution would be better satisfied with the use of that power in the limited manner contended for by the Federalists than by the extent contended for by their opponents; but I never doubted that the limitation of the Federalists was absolutely necessary to prevent the executive power from passing into the hands of a *cabal*. Under this conviction, I easily adopted the idea that the power of the Senate was in no sense *initiative or even active*, but *negative* and *censorial*, and was never to be exercised but in cases where the *persons* proposed for office were *unfit*. I have always rejected the idea of non-concurrence with a nomination merely because the nominee was less suitable for the office than thousands of others: he must be positively *unfit* for the office, and the public duty not likely to be performed by him, to justify in my mind the non-concurrence. It has always appeared to me that a departure from this principle would soon wrest from the President altogether the essence of the nominating power, *which is the power of selecting officers;* and I am fully persuaded that the disposal of offices is of all things the

[1] Joel Barlow, afterwards minister to France during Mr. Madison's administration.

most dangerous to a *body* of men. The motives to provide for the friends of each other, and to feed their dependants, are so powerful, that they will always be yielded to by men who do not stand *individually* responsible to public opinion. I am persuaded that any body of men as numerous as the Senate, possessing such a power, however pure they may have been originally, will be corrupted by it, and will corrupt others. With respect to the power of the Senate in making treaties, I believe in matters of such great moment it was well to provide that their *sanction* should be given to treaties before they could have the force of laws, or be binding on the nation. It is a check upon the President that may be always salutary by way of prevention of abuses, and is a quiet and effectual remedy in the last resorts; but the same sort of objections as are made to their sharing actually with the President the power of appointment to office apply to their sharing in the actual management of foreign relations. If the Senate of the United States should be admitted to possess the *right* to determine *à priori* what foreign connections should be sought or shunned, I should fear that they would soon exhibit the humiliating spectacle of caps and hats, which so long and so naturally appeared in Sweden.[1] I confess to you my opinion that republican governments have never yet had a fair experiment in the world, chiefly because they have never constituted the supreme executive, at the same time single and independent, of competent force and sufficient duration. If a free government is a government of laws, constitutionally enacted, there ought always to exist a power to execute those laws; otherwise it is a faction governs instead of the laws. The presidential authority of the United States will dwindle to nothing, if the policy of the Senate should so far change that they assume to themselves, *and deny to the President*, all the power the

[1] By the great limitations imposed on the royal power after the death of Charles XII., the Diet became all-powerful. Consisting of four orders, nobles, burghers, clergy, and peasants, the Diet was always turbulent, and soon grew to be corrupt. The "Hats" were those who wished to invigorate the royal power, which the "Caps" sought to still further diminish. The "Caps" were in the pay of Russia, and the "Hats" soon sold themselves to France. These miserable intrigues and turbulent dissensions were at their height during the reign of Adolphus Frederick (1751–1771). The son and successor of Frederic, Gustavus III., rebelled against this odious legislative tyranny, accompanied by foreign interference. By a well-executed *coup d'état*, he overthrew the power of the Diet, and converted the most limited monarchy in Europe into one of the most absolute.

words of the Constitution will allow. I am sensible there are evils both ways, and the caprice which has been discovered to govern some most important determinations leads one to lay less stress on the advantage of *individual responsibility* than abstract reasonings promise; still, however, it is, in my opinion, the best part of our Federal theory. I certainly do not mean to flatter when I attribute to this principle, operating through the medium of the executive departments, *every thing excellent* which has been done by the government.

I well remember the business of the Spanish treaty, and I think I was one of the committee to whom the reference was made. A number of commercial points were examined, and the Senate agreed that they would ratify, &c. This was *abundant caution* on the part of the President, and was not supposed to be a measure which the Senate could with any propriety have moved in, *unless required by the President.*

The arguments you have used are better than those I heard in the Senate on that side of the question. They are sufficient to warrant, perhaps, the construction they advocate, if that construction would in fact be propitious to the best administration of the government. You see I give you my unstudied sentiments with a frankness which would need apology, if separated from other sentiments which I indulge with pride and pleasure. Mr. T. Williams has just received a pamphlet containing Sir William Scott's opinion and decision on the ships captured under the Swedish convoy. I was allowed only twenty minutes to run it over, but I saw enough to make me insist it should be sent to you, unless it immediately goes through the press.

I remain your faithful friend, and much obliged

GEORGE CABOT.

P. S. I had written to Mr. Ellsworth through the medium of Governor Trumbull, and received his answer before your suggestion. I rejoiced to find he thinks precisely as we do on the general merits.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

TRENTON, Sept. 29, 1799.

DEAR SIR, — I have just received your favor of the 23d. With respect to the appointment to office by a body of men, I have for a long series of years entertained the same opinion which you express;

and yet there are exceptions which produce no mischief, as in Connecticut, where even the judges are annually appointed by the legislative body. But such are the excellent habits of the people of that small State that the *executive* as well as *judicial* offices are *in fact* held *during good behavior*. The ideas I expressed on the treaty-making power were those of the moment, arising as I wrote. They concerned a question which, having been *settled* before I came into the administration, I had never heard discussed, and which, for want of an occasion, had never exercised my own reflections; and, pressed by the existing evil, my thoughts reached after an immediate, I should rather say *direct*, remedy. It is doubtless best that the *initiative* power in making treaties should rest with the President; and, as foreign powers know that the validity of his stipulations depends on the sanction of the Senate, they will accordingly make their calculations. The *secrecy* necessary in negotiating would be impracticable, if the Senate were to partake in the first stages thereof; and this, when writing you before, struck me so forcibly, that I conceived the Senate should be previously consulted only on the single question, — Shall any treaty be formed with such a foreign power?

(*Confidential.*)

With your letter, I received this morning one from Mr. Ellsworth, dated the 26th, in which he quotes from a letter he had just received from the President the following words: "The convulsions in France, the change of the Directory, and the prognostics of a greater change, will certainly induce me to postpone, for a longer or shorter time, the mission to France." These are the very reasons (to be sure, very obvious ones) which, with the assent of my colleagues, I had stated to the President as motives for *suspending* the mission in a letter the receipt of which he has acknowledged, but without expressing himself so strongly as in the above passage to Mr. Ellsworth. I have indeed supposed that, not having condescended to consult us in the origin of this humiliating business, we should not be the first to be made acquainted with a suspension or abandonment of it: it would savor of concession. Before this reaches you, another promising circumstance will be known to you, — his departure from Quincy for Trenton, where he will meet Messrs. Ellsworth and Davie and the heads of departments prior to a final determination. It has therefore happened well, probably,

that the publication of "Cato"[1] was omitted. You will find the six numbers enclosed. Mr. Wolcott has read them.

I am most truly yours, TIMOTHY PICKERING.

I have received from Mr. King Sir William Scott's opinion and decision on the Swedish convoy. The instructions to our armed vessels conform to the doctrine he lays down. Have you got Barlow's late letter, addressed to the citizens of the United States, in which he tells us that "seventy millions of dollars have been taken from us by the French"? I have not seen it.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, Oct. 16, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR, — I ought immediately on receipt of your favor of the 2d to have made the acknowledgment; but I procrastinated it, upon the idea that I should accompany it with a few remarks on the observations you had made on British finances, and the effects which might ultimately be felt *here* in case of their derangement.

I am forcibly struck with the importance of your opinions, and see in them a new motive to regret the unfortunate measures of our executive. I think, however, that the resources of Great Britain have always been underrated. An industrious, enterprising, and ingenious nation, possessing almost exclusively and securely the navigation and trading stock of three-quarters of the globe, and a large portion of the skill, machinery, and capital of its manufactures, and all the advantages of these well protected to the individual proprietors by a liberal, just, and stable government, offer a mass of productive power, the fruits of which can hardly be calculated.

I saw plainly at the moment bank-notes were not exchangeable for gold and silver at the option of the holder, that these metals were no longer the measure of value. I have been astonished to see the paper supported; and I do not expect to see this support continue, unless the paper shall *in fact* be exchangeable at the pleasure of the holder. Gold and silver must inevitably disappear soon after the depreciation of paper appears; but, all this being perfectly understood, it is presumable that those who guide the affairs of the nation will either return and adhere rigidly to the

[1] The signature under which Mr. Cabot wrote the series of papers not published at the time, but given above, pp. 238–240.

metals, or introduce a paper *system* which shall accommodate their necessities, and finally relieve the nation from some part of its burden. But, in either course, the society ought not to be disorganized; and, constituted as they are and abounding in means, I should think motives could not be wanting to preserve the order of the state while the operation is performing. If, however, it be true that the passions of the nation must be occupied in a foreign war to prevent their employment at home, such a war must be with the great powers of Europe, or it will not be sufficiently interesting. Indeed, every war into which France or England enters may be expected to engage them both as adversaries; and this great rivalry seems to me to furnish a strong motive with each of them to avoid pushing *us* to hostility. I cannot deny that what you suggest as a means of preserving their artists and manufacturing capitals will be likely to occur to the British cabinet, and will be so strong a temptation to break with us, that, if aided by other motives, it may prevail. I do believe, however, it would be a short-sighted policy which sacrifices permanent objects to temporary ones. In saying this, I assume for fact that our own policy will be prudent and conciliatory toward them. This country for half a century to come may be immensely valuable to Great Britain as a consuming customer, and this connection would be *at least* as beneficial to us as to them. Nothing but violence can interrupt this salutary intercourse. Violence long continued, however, often repeated or extremely aggravated, may destroy it. Instead of laws like those proposed by Madison, Great Britain ought to be made to see that we will not sacrifice our interests to our passions, still less to the passions of France. She ought to be satisfied that we are not the dupes of her rival, and that we never will quarrel with her or embarrass the commercial intercourse with her while she regulates her own conduct toward us by the rules of *acknowledged* justice. If these impressions could be made, not by verbal profession merely, but by uniform public policy, I think no wise administration of that country would desire to quarrel with us, and no one that did not defy the censures of the British people would dare to do it.

You see by these impotent endeavors to disprove the dangers you apprehend that I am alarmed at them. It is to be feared that we shall be plunged into a sea of troubles before we are prepared. If the strange and disastrous course taken last winter is to be pursued, or indeed is not to be openly and unequivocally abandoned,

a war with Great Britain is hardly avoidable. Under the delusive pretence of impartial and independent sentiments, I expect soon to see an address to the latent animosities of our people against the English. A man who loses the approbation of the wise and good can hardly forbear to appeal to their adversaries; who will be glad to succor him.

If it be not practicable to persuade such a one that he may yet easily secure the permanent support of his first friends, if he will be steady to his own first principles, our affairs are hopeless. Every thing will be rendered odious that is truly valuable, our army, public credit, &c., will be sacrificed to popularity, and at last opposition to French principles will be treated as a predilection for whatever is British. You see how I run, and will justly say I ought to stop. Farewell.

G. C.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

Oct. 16, 1799.

My dear Sir, — It has given inexpressible pleasure to all the thinking men from New York to Portsmouth to see that the embassy to France is suspended. Mr. Ellsworth communicated this agreeable intelligence as soon as he received it, and it travelled with the rapidity of good news. Still, however, it is seen that much more is to be done to retrieve our lost character: we cannot recover the high ground on which we stood twelve months ago. The truth is, we had then more reputation than real character: I fear now we have less. I am almost ashamed to use a term which has been so frequently applied as to seem absurd, yet I cannot refrain from saying that we are arrived at a great crisis in our affairs. We are certainly in danger of involving the country in a war, in which the losses by commerce and internal expenses will not be the greatest evils: our strongest passions will be vented upon each other. I am expecting to see the popular animosity to the English resorted to, as a means of recruiting personal influence. It will not surprise me to see the importance of impartial and independent sentiments insisted on, while the true design of the preacher will be to captivate the public feelings by abstract ideas, which, though just and proper in themselves, are often rendered pernicious by the manner in which they are applied. Every man of honor and dignity recognizes the worth of elevated sentiments, every lover of the country feels a glow of patriotism at the expres-

sion of manly spirit toward those whose haughtiness wounds our just pride, and whose insolence and power seem to insult our weakness. To these add a formidable party, ready to catch at whatever can be used to foment our hatred to the English, and mitigate our resentments toward France. In a word, it appears to me all our prudence, if we were free to exercise it, would not be more than enough to keep peace. Doubtless you have received informal accounts of the general reprobation in Europe of the nominations to France. It is not confined to England, but is heard on the borders of the Mediterranean as well as the Baltic and North Sea: such, at least, is the information of all my visitors from Boston. Is it not possible to make the President see this business in its true light? Will he not acknowledge that we ought upon principle, and at any rate *upon policy*, to conciliate the good-will of the coalesced powers? These powers are become victorious, and for a little while may be too formidable to be trifled with. Does not our own interest require that all suspicions should be removed, concerning our disposition toward the parties at war? Is it not possible to satisfy the President that those of whom he is jealous have no views but public, and that they will cordially support *him* and his administration upon the principles he has always avowed, and with few exceptions generally practised? It appears too evident that, if the President persists in the course he has taken a few steps further, he must break all terms with his best friends, his only real friends, who are in fact the genuine friends of the government and the country. I confess I don't know the man, but perhaps you do, who might by a full and free conversation reconcile him to his ministers, and, what is more difficult, reconcile him to himself. It is worth the trial before the meeting of Congress. It may afterwards be too late. I looked to Ellsworth,[1] but he says he can do no more. Where is Judge Patterson? He has the right sort of sense and spirit.

I know of only one copy of Barlow's address, which was the one I had read. Measures are taken to procure it for you, but I don't know yet the success. If it can be obtained, it shall be transmitted.

With unfeigned respect, esteem, and attachment,

I remain ever yours, G. C.

[1] Oliver Ellsworth, of Connecticut, so frequently referred to in these letters, is, of course, well known as chief justice of the United States and envoy to France. He served as senator from Connecticut during Mr. Cabot's term of office, and they were always warm friends.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

(*Private and confidential.*)

TRENTON, Oct. 22, 1799.

DEAR SIR, — The die is cast: the envoys go to France, or rather to Europe, to see if they can enter France.

When the President wrote Mr. Ellsworth, from Quincy, that he should delay the mission for a longer or a shorter time, we imagined he would not finally decide the great question — to send or not to send — without asking some opinions. But we have mistaken. Nobody was consulted: *he had deliberated fully on the subject, and his determination was unchangeable.* Thus decided, it would have been indecorous to have asked advice. If you were deputed on this mission, you would little imagine that you were going on a *party of pleasure;* yet the President suggests that it will be "entertaining" as well as "instructive" to the envoys, and, "whether it succeed or not, useful to their country."

I thought of your idea, that, in the last resort, Mr. Ellsworth should *refuse.* But what would have been the alternative? Probably the appointment of Madison or Burr.

This measure will unquestionably change the whole administration, if it should not eventually occasion the subversion of the government. A change of the administration from one set of Federal hands to another would be of little moment, but it will not be such a change. Jefferson will be President, Gallatin Secretary of the Treasury, Madison Secretary of State, and two other like political characters be placed at the head of the other departments.

There is but one way in which these evils can be prevented, — it is the only way in which the mischiefs of this French mission can be repaired, the only atonement which the President can make to his country for this fatal error, — his announcing publicly, at the close of the next session of Congress, *that he will retire.* Then the Federalists, uniting in one man for his successor, might yet save the country from ruin.

The envoys embark forthwith at Newport, in the United States frigate.

Mr. Murray has given many details of the French affairs. He thinks the Republic will not last six months. The President says it will last seven years, and desires his opinion may be remem-

bered.[1] Whatever is unfavorable to this prediction is doubted or disbelieved. The account we have had of the battle of Novi and the death of Joubert was a stock-jobbing story![2] I have not time to add, but that I am ever most truly yours,

T. PICKERING.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

(*Private.*)

TRENTON, Oct. 24, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR, — Your letter of the 16th has just come to hand. I have already written you that the great question of the mission to France has been finally decided by the *President alone.* Patterson is in Georgia; but an angel from heaven would have produced no change. In most matters, we are consulted, and our ideas often adopted; but on this all-important question, from first to last, we have been absolutely excluded. Some conversation took place last Thursday with the envoys, who dined with the President (after the point had been previously decided), when many strange ideas were broached. I heard Judge Ellsworth recite a part, but had not patience to hear the remainder, and went away. It was at Wolcott's the same evening. I have desired him to commit it to writing, which he has promised to do.

I am sincerely yours, TIMOTHY PICKERING.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, Oct. 31, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR, — The two letters I received from Trenton yesterday deprived me of last night's sleep. My gloomy imagination is too apt to persuade me that the worst which *can* happen *will* happen, or rather that measures of a *tendency* manifestly evil will produce the evil to which they tend. Thus, from the moment the nomination of ministers to France was made known to me, I saw an unavoidable division of the Federalists, and apprehended the triumph of Jacobinism in the United States; and I foresaw distinctly a foreign war, ruinous and disgraceful, which by prudent

[1] This prediction is correct in regard to the conquests of the allies; but, within less than a month from this time, Bonaparte was proclaimed first consul, and the French republic ceased to exist in aught but name.

[2] Joubert was defeated at Novi, by Suwarrow, with great loss, Aug. 15, 1799. Joubert himself and ten thousand Frenchmen, including many distinguished officers, were slain.

measures might be honorably avoided.[1] These things are undoubtedly to be dreaded, as the consequences of the absurd and unadvised project of courting the revolutionary sect, and appearing to connect ourselves with them at a moment when their power is so fallen as to leave us without the plea of necessity, and when it is highly probable they are about to expiate the crimes they have committed against rational liberty and the wretchedness they have inflicted upon millions of innocent people. The annunciation by the President of his resolution to decline being a candidate at the next election would be indeed the most effectual reparation and atonement that could be made for the fatal error; but this is not to be expected, and I should sooner expect a resignation, which would punish those[2] who have dared to prefer the interest of the body of the country to that of its head. I have flattered myself that the great Washington would again come upon the stage, if the occasion should be made to appear worthy of his reappearance.[3]

The prediction of years' duration to the revolutionary sect in France *may be true*, but it is highly improbable. Frenchmen will themselves annihilate the remaining powers in France, if the coalesced powers act with discretion and in concert. If they liberate the conquered nations and leave France to herself, a king will be established before the expiration of 1800. It will probably be the case, at any rate; but such a prediction as that of the seven years favors the policy so generally reprobated by *other* wise men. Similar to this is the opinion of J. Q. Adams, in a letter from Berlin, 19th of April, to a friend in London. He approved of the nomination; he thought the campaign there favorable to France, although every one else thought otherwise. My messenger waits, and only allows me to add that I am always

Your faithful and affectionate friend, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

Nov. 1, 1799.

DEAR SIR, — I have not been able to find a copy of Joel Barlow's address, but I am told that the one which had been formerly lent me is in Philadelphia. Whether it is in the hands of the

[1] All these events ultimately came to pass, though the consequences were not in all respects as dreadful as the writer anticipated.

[2] By causing Mr. Jefferson, then Vice-President, to succeed at once to the first office.

[3] Compare Sparks's Life of G. Morris, III. 123.

President or his secretary, or of some other person, could not be ascertained. I think it probably, however, to be with the President. My young friends are still looking out for another copy for you. It is, on the whole, a very contemptible performance; yet there may be some good use of it in proving the connection between our patriots and the Directory, which appears by the letter to the latter from Barlow and Skipwith.

Yours truly, G. CABOT.

WOLCOTT TO CABOT.

(*Private.*)

PHILADELPHIA, NOV. 4, 1799.

DEAR SIR, — I agree with you that the resources of Great Britain, derived from superior skill, ingenuity, and industry, protected by a stable government, have rarely or never been properly appreciated. Amidst the passions and turbulence of the times, the finances have been administered with firmness and intelligence, which have rarely been imparted to statesmen. Some evils have been foreseen and avoided, others have been mitigated, and in every conjunction the government has manifested an exact knowledge of its real situation.

But after paying the respect which is due to the foresight and energy of the British administration, and after admitting (as I explicitly do) that the government was right in prosecuting the war at every hazard, I cannot but think that the success of the financial system of Great Britain has been in a great measure owing to the misfortunes of other nations, and that an immediate peace would greatly endanger the government. Great as the profits of the nation really are, they must be admitted to be insufficient to furnish thirty millions annually to the government in loans, besides twenty-five millions of revenue, and all in addition to the immense capital required for new establishments in the four quarters of the globe. The true cause of the existing credit of the government, in my opinion, is that Great Britain has so far the exclusive command of several great objects of commerce that she can for *a time* prescribe for the commercial world an artificial measure of value. The precious metals could not be commanded in sufficient quantities to answer the purposes of interior circulation and to balance all her public and commercial negotiations with foreign countries.

She has therefore declared *paper* to be *money*, and *gold* and *silver* to be *merchandise*. Her immense commerce enables her to command the gold and silver necessary for *foreign* intercourse, and the quantity of *paper* is so regulated by the administration and by governmental operations of finance as not greatly to exceed the demand. The price of labor, of manufactures, in short of every thing, is however gradually rising, and the system must fail whenever any considerable foreign nation can successfully compete with Great Britain in manufactures or in the supply of the tropical climates, which constitute the basis of her commerce and revenue.

Events may happen which may disconcert the plans of the British government. I believe, however, that their calculations are formed for a long continuance of the war; that a speedy restoration of any settled system in France is not expected; and that there exists but little confidence in the sincerity of the Austrian government. By continuing the war, the fine edge of Jacobinism will be worn smooth, the enthusiasm of the new sectaries will be abated. As the danger diminishes, Great Britain will diminish her resistance. In the mean time, that island will be made the *entrepôt* of the world, and the national debt be disposed of in the best manner which circumstances will permit. When peace is made, I presume it is intended that Great Britain shall be at least as little embarrassed with debt as her neighbors.

I am sensible that the reasoning on which my opinion is founded, and which does not presume any intentional fraud, would be deemed abstruse, if fully detailed. Perhaps it is unfounded. I know that a war would be illy relished by the merchants and manufacturers of Great Britain, and the same may be said with truth of the merchants and ship-owners of the United States. It is on this circumstance I found my argument of the ill policy of the late measures of our government. We might have secured the influence of these men in our favor, and thus preserved peace, and have attracted much of the capital and commerce of Great Britain to our country. There are, however, ill-concealed prejudices existing in both countries; and my apprehension is that the *passions* of certain descriptions of persons in Great Britain and the United States will be employed to aid the deliberate calculations of the British cabinet. If our envoys arrive when the governments of Europe are prepared to negotiate for a general peace, the mission will by accident become a proper and safe measure. *I* do not

expect a general peace; and, if the war continues, I believe experience will show that a great mistake has been committed. I cannot believe that either the British government or their merchants will consider it for their interest to permit us to prosecute a free commerce with France; and if, after a treaty shall be made, our trade shall be interdicted, the United States will commence or retaliate hostilities.

But it has been decreed that the negotiation shall be prosecuted, and we must submit. The President directed the instructions to be prepared, and his orders were obeyed. Expectations were in a certain way encouraged, that the persons who were compelled to participate in this business would be permitted to explain their sentiments; but, as soon as the papers were completed, the envoys were directed to proceed immediately. The President, having formed his own judgment upon the measure, did not think it right to consult opinions which he foreknew could not shake his purpose. Thus are the United States governed as Jupiter is represented to have governed Olympus: without regarding the opinions of friends or enemies, all are summoned to hear, reverence, and obey the unchangeable fiat. It must for some time remain a question whether the master or his servants are in an error.

Although without desponding I deprecate this measure in respect to our foreign relations, yet the effects upon our domestic interests appear to me incapable of mitigation. It is certain that the Federal party will be paralyzed, nor do I perceive how the present system of measures can be maintained. The people will not support the army; the navy will not be increased; neither taxes nor loans will be permitted beyond what may be necessary to discharge existing engagements; the President will gain no new supporters; his former friends will be in disgrace with the public; and the administration of John Adams, so much extolled, will end by a transfer of the powers of the government to the rival party.

I am, dear sir, Your friend and obedient servant, O. W.

Cabot to Wolcott.

Brookline, Nov. 14, 1799.

My dear Sir,—I have read your excellent letter of the 4th, in which you have added to the stock of ideas occasioned by your former observations on British affairs. My mind has been occupied with some other subjects, or this would have absorbed it.

Whether all the consequences you apprehend should be experienced or not, I shall always be satisfied your reasonings are just, as they are profound. I still think, however, that means will be found to manage that great debt, and bring it to a *bearable* weight without greatly disordering the state.

I had yesterday some conversation with Mr. Senator Dexter, and was much pleased to find his good sense prevailing over all sorts of nonsense on the subject of the late occurrence.

Your obliged, &c., G. CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, Dec. 16, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR, — The intimations contained in the speech are of the sort which I feared, but not so plain as I expected. The partisans of Jacobinism rejoice to see that the principles of this sect are no longer denounced, and triumphantly ask "if it is not evident *now* that the charges of their enemies are calumnious?" "Great pains had been taken," they say, "to misrepresent them *to the people*, and to make it believed that the French revolutionary system was a war against real liberty and legitimate property in every country, and that the owners of property everywhere ought therefore to discountenance it." "But," it is asked, "if this were true, would the head of our nation be seen negotiating with France?" "Would they treat with the Directory, if it were true that the Directory were supposed capable of such vile conduct as is ascribed to them?" "At any rate," they say, "the President discards the jealousy of French designs, which had begun to take hold of our citizens," &c., &c. But if the silence observed toward French principles is in itself so grateful, it is no less so to find some general expressions of uneasiness which may be explained by the well-known feelings toward another nation *which are always popular*. To these sources of pleasure the Jacobins add the hope of getting rid of the army, and the influence of some great men connected with it, so that the pure principles of democracy may be no longer restrained, but have a free course, as in France, &c., &c., &c.

How often has it happened that we have derived from our blunders greater benefits than from what we should have called the wisest policy? There is a reason for this, which in many cases it

is easy to discern. The republic is not to be despaired of. If we are to have an inundation of Democratic evils, we shall have better dikes afterwards; if we are only threatened, we shall strengthen those we already have. While I cannot but feel the greatest concern for the events which are soon to happen, I confide in the *ultimate* good destiny of our country; and I feel extremely anxious that those who now labor to administer its affairs properly should *then* enjoy the superior satisfaction of having striven against every error, and persevered in fulfilling duties the more difficult from being left unsupported. Sure I am at this moment that the *merit* of those men whose services are now rendered under circumstances of great discouragement is distinctly seen and justly valued by the wisest and best citizens. Suffer me, therefore, to hope that the helm of state will not be abandoned by those who watch while they cannot guide it. It is often remarked that the situation is difficult as well as delicate into which the auxiliaries of our Federal head are brought; but it *always* is maintained that their honor and dignity will be best supported by a steady, inflexible adherence to official duties.

I don't know why I trouble you with ideas of this sort, unless it is that I partake of the fear sometimes expressed, "that the patience of our secretaries will be exhausted." It ought not to be supposed possible, and therefore I pay them no compliment in admitting the influence for a moment.

Your obliged and faithful friend, GEORGE CABOT.

CHAPTER VIII.

1800.

Dissensions of Federalists. — Hamilton's Pamphlet. — Presidential Election. — Correspondence.

MISFORTUNES accumulated about the dominant party, as the last year of the century closed. When Congress assembled, though the Federalists had for the first time a large working majority, it was seen that the great secret of their former success had been lost. Perfect harmony was at an end. The moderate Southern men, under the lead of Marshall, approved the French mission; but the extreme wing of the party dissented wholly from the peace policy of the President, and as the necessary result all consistent action was paralyzed. Jefferson perceived with exultation that their majority availed his opponents nothing. This early display of the bad effects of internal quarrels was by no means the smallest evil which at that time befell the Federalists. Their differences were greatly aggravated by Tench Coxe's perfidious publication of a letter written to him by Mr. Adams, in 1792. The latter, with the hasty suspicion that was always too common with him, had there hinted in plain terms that the Pinckneys of South Carolina were British sympathizers. The publication of the letter at this time helped to inflame Mr. Adams's opponents. It convinced them that Mr. Adams purposed and had long planned their ruin, by rousing against them the latent popular hatred of any one who dared to speak well of England. From its nature as well as from its falseness, this charge was one of the prime causes in the dissolution of the party; and every thing that tended

to show Mr. Adams to be its author embittered the resistance of the ultra-Federalists.

But the event which removed the last chance of peace was the death of Washington. In the midst of their feuds and anxieties, with political overthrow staring them in the face, the Federalist leaders had begun to look despairingly to Washington as the only man who could maintain the party and govern the country. They were not without hopes even that the great Virginian might be induced to again emerge from retirement and assume the Presidency. But now all this was ended by death, and even the vague hope afforded by the possibility of Washington's reappearance was taken from them.

From Mr. Cabot's earliest letters in this year, it is clear that there were symptoms of a desire on the part of the extreme Federalists, and of the President as well, to accept the situation with a better temper, and, if possible, to heal the wounds already inflicted on the party. Every thing, however, was against such a solution. Not only had personal hostilities gone too far to be allayed, but the element of secrecy added much to all the difficulties of the situation. The great mass of the party, though differing among themselves perhaps as to the expediency of the second mission, were sincerely united in wishing party harmony. Through ignorance, they were prevented from forwarding the object of their wishes by any general and decisive manifestation of opinion. Every one knew that grave dissensions existed among the leaders; but very few persons understood exactly what those differences were, or how far they had gone, nor did any of the immediate parties to the quarrel desire to make their controversies public. Mr. Adams had no wish to drive the hostile chiefs into open rebellion; and the leaders, conscious of their own weakness in the party, were most unwilling to appeal to that tribunal for redress. But the fire burnt all the more hotly, because smothered in this unnatural manner. Moreover, the leaders of the

party, though opposed to Mr. Adams, were by no means united in their own plans. Pickering and Wolcott wished the overthrow of Mr. Adams, at any and all risks; while the others, more prudent and less exasperated by personal encounters, saw the impossibility of such a step. The result was that in a secret caucus of the Federal members of Congress, held at Philadelphia, it was voted to support Adams and Pinckney for the offices of President and Vice-President. Yet owing to the differences among themselves, which crippled every movement of the Federalists, it was not decided whether Mr. Adams or Mr. Pinckney was to be considered the party choice for the first office. From the nature of the existing electoral law, the simple determination to vote for two candidates equally without distinctly settling the distribution of the two offices left the door open for indefinite intrigue. Hence the omission to indicate beyond question the party choice afforded an almost irresistible inducement to the enemies of the President to quietly try to bring Pinckney in over him; while, to the partisans of Mr. Adams, the possibility of such an event was an incentive to throw away a sufficient number of votes to insure the relegation of Pinckney to the second place. Thus, while one side was tempted to gratify their personal hatred, at the expense of party faith and honor, the other was ready to risk a total defeat rather than expose their favorite candidate to the loss of the first office.

The action of one or two of the more prominent leaders contributed to widen still further the already existing breach, and to foster the intrigues for which the uncertain action of the caucus gave abundant opportunity. The first overt act was committed by Mr. Adams. By the results of the Federal caucus and the disastrous termination of the New York elections, the President must have perceived that his fate in the coming campaign would depend solely upon the action of the Southern Federalists. He therefore determined, now that it could make matters no worse,

to rid himself of his opponents in the cabinet, and, in pursuance of the object, requested, and at once received, McHenry's resignation. On the refusal of Pickering to follow McHenry's example, Mr. Adams dismissed him from the Secretaryship of State. The only criticism that can be made on this action of the President's is that he should have dismissed Pickering, McHenry, and Wolcott as well, at least a year sooner than he actually did. There is no necessity to seek for good and sufficient reasons for these cabinet changes. The secretaries had consistently opposed Mr. Adams in his recent measures; and, whether those measures were wise or not, this of itself is full justification for their dismissal. No man can carry on an administration properly, unless his cabinet is in substantial agreement with him. Such had long ceased to be the case with Mr. Adams; and that he hesitated so long to exercise an undoubted right, and to perform what was in fact a duty, can only be attributed to his unwillingness to force a party quarrel. Had he changed his secretaries sooner, the trouble sure to result from such a step might possibly have been in a measure overcome before the party became involved in another electoral contest. Inasmuch as Mr. Adams's removal of the secretaries can be defended on the broadest and soundest political principles, it is to be regretted that it has been thought necessary to bring sweeping charges of intrigue and bad faith against them and all their friends. Intrigue and bad faith are harsh words, and demand great care and exact definition on the part of those who use them. There is unfortunately in this instance ground for such accusations; but they have been exaggerated, and have not been applied with sufficient precision.

To say that cabinet officers are guilty of intrigue and of bad faith, because they discuss the government policy in letters to confidential friends, seems wholly unreasonable. That leaders of a party in office should, under the seal of secrecy, reveal the policy of the administration to a few

other leaders out of office, seems so unquestioned a right that, to borrow a legal phrase, history may be said to take judicial cognizance of it. We may even go farther, and say that cabinet officers have an undoubted right, if differing from the supreme executive as to the expediency of a measure, to make an effort to alter his course by bringing to his notice the views of his most prominent supporters, as well as the general party sentiment. This was done, and to judge by the correspondence was all that was done, in the affair of the major-generals;[1] yet Mr. Adams made a charge of intrigue, which has since been renewed against all concerned in that affair. The case is very different, however, where cabinet officers, opposed in opinion to their official chief, use the opportunities of their confidential relations to destroy or injure him. Pickering took advantage of his position in attacking Mr. Adams, and both he and Wolcott furnished Hamilton with material obtained in their official capacity for use in further attacks.[2] Such a course deserves the stigma of bad faith, and Pickering and Wolcott are open to all the censure which must attach to it. But, be all this as it may, there can be no doubt that Mr. Adams was fully justified in ejecting his secretaries, nor that their dismissal was a most disastrous opening to the ensuing campaign. Colonel Pickering now lost all restraint, and wrote to every Federalist leader letters abounding in the most virulent invective against the President. The latter retorted; and accusations of being a "damned faction," an "Essex Junto," and "a British faction," were again loudly repeated against all Mr. Adams's opponents.

Mr. Cabot had received the news of Pickering's dismissal with unfeigned indignation; for he saw in this step, as he

[1] Colonel Pickering, as appears from letters in the Pickering MSS., had a more definite plan, and desired more combination in regard to the appointment of Hamilton. But he seems to have stood alone; and with this exception I am satisfied of the correctness of the statement in the text.

[2] See Pickering to Hamilton, Hamilton's Works, VI. 443; Wolcott to Hamilton, Ibid., 447; Hamilton to Wolcott, Ibid., 449. Authorities can be multiplied, but these serve as illustrations.

believed, the complete abandonment by Mr. Adams of all the best principles of the Federalist party. Besides the fact that Colonel Pickering was his warm personal friend, Mr. Cabot was still further aroused by the cry of "British faction," raised by the President and his supporters. He knew that the sympathy which he and many of his friends felt for Great Britain in her struggle with France, and their desire that the United States, so far as they co-operated with any foreign power, should aid England, were dictated by reason and by motives of the soundest policy. With even more keenness and with the greatest justice, he felt outraged by the illiberal demagogue cry of a "British faction." Rightly or wrongly, he attributed the authorship of this charge to the President, and to such partisans as Gerry; and he deeply resented it. Mr. Cabot was far more unwilling than most of his contemporaries to embroil himself in personal quarrels; but he felt it to be inconsistent with his own self-respect to make any advances toward a renewal of his former friendly intercourse with Mr. Adams, on the latter's return to Quincy, in the spring of 1800. Thus did the animosity of Colonel Pickering, and the consequent violence exhibited by Mr. Adams, serve to complete the alienation of the more temperate men among the extreme Federalists, — men like Mr. Cabot, who were in the beginning truly desirous of making much personal sacrifice, that party harmony might be secured.

The absorbing question during the summer of 1800 was, of course, the impending election. Mr. Cabot believed that there were only two courses possible, — either the open rejection of Mr. Adams, or a fair and equal support of Adams and Pinckney. The action of the caucus at Philadelphia, and the popular favor with which Mr. Adams was generally regarded, had made the first of these alternatives impossible; and Mr. Cabot therefore felt that it only remained to adopt the second in perfect good faith. He considered it essential, either for success or honorable

defeat, that unquestioned fairness in the maintenance of the pledge to cast an equal vote for Adams and Pinckney should be observed, and that a spirit of mutual concession should be manifested by the contending factions. But matters had gone too far for such moderate counsels. The charge of belonging to a "British faction" had worked Hamilton beyond the point of dislike toward Mr. Adams, into a condition of such rage that passion seems to have completely mastered his political judgment. His first step was to transmit to Mr. Adams a letter requesting an explanation of the charge of belonging to a "British faction," directed against himself, and authorized, as he understood, by the President himself. If the latter could have answered this letter by a denial of the authorship of this charge, it is clear he should have done so. If he could not, then the silence which he observed was perhaps the wisest course under the circumstances. This much is certain, that this refusal to reply was not calculated to mend matters; and Hamilton resolved forthwith to make a public attack on the President. From such a proceeding Mr. Cabot strove most earnestly to dissuade him. He represented to him the absurdity of supporting in one breath for the highest office in the land a man whom in the next he attacked most bitterly. Though conceding the possible necessity of defending themselves against the cry of "British faction," Mr. Cabot urged upon Hamilton the great dangers from the imputation of foul play which would be involved in a public onslaught on their candidate. Keenly alive to the reflections to which such a step would expose Hamilton himself, Mr. Cabot even went so far as to say that, if Hamilton must publish, he had better do it anonymously. But all was in vain. Hamilton published his attack on Mr. Adams, and, in so doing, signed the death-warrant of his party. Every thing had tended in but one direction since the departure of the French mission; but Hamilton's pamphlet was the last act in this melancholy

political drama. Whatever chance of success the Federalists may have had before, nothing was now possible but defeat. All confidence was destroyed, all belief in the validity of party pledges and party faith vanished, and the Federalists were left to the contemplation of what their own hands had wrought. Mr. Cabot was too experienced a political observer, and too little of an optimist, not to perceive clearly the unmistakable presages of disaster. From his letters during the summer, it is evident that he was hoping against hope, and that he had prepared his own mind, and was striving to prepare his friends for the coming defeat. But, however much philosophy he may have displayed in contemplating the probable future, his patience was entirely overcome when he received Hamilton's pamphlet. That this ill-timed and ill-advised attack should have been made at all was bad enough, but that it should be such a lame assault was too much to be borne. Not only was the self-stultification of supporting and attacking the same person as complete as he had foreseen, but the attack itself seemed to him an utter failure. Thoroughly disheartened and disappointed, Mr. Cabot wrote Hamilton a letter in which, with manly frankness, but with entire courtesy, he expressed his opinion of this performance. To the credit of both men, it may be said that this honest and severe criticism produced no change or diminution in their friendship.

In due course, the election was held; and the Federalists were compelled to endure the defeat which their own blunders and high temper had made inevitable. To every one who admires the Federalist party, as all intelligent and fair-minded men must; to every one who recalls the courage, the ability, the sagacity with which the foundations of American nationality were laid; to all who reverence the party that counted Washington, Hamilton, Marshall, and Adams among its leaders, the story of that great party's downfall must be melancholy in the extreme.

Led by the greatest men in American history, officered with a greater amount of ability than was ever displayed by all other political parties in America, the Federalists, by their own strong and uncurbed wills, by their own errors and their own passions, brought upon themselves a premature defeat, which neither the address of Jefferson, the wisdom of Madison, nor all the popular majorities of Democracy had been able to compass;

"And when they fell, they fell like Lucifer, never to hope again."

Cabot to Wolcott.

Brookline, Jan. 13, 1800.

My dear Sir, — I have not seen our friend Ames since he received the letter of which you speak. It is impossible you should be free from great perplexities; but why should you not cultivate a little stoicism, and not be wretched because ——— and ———[1] are about you?

Whatever shall be done or attempted that tends to dishonor us, I am sure will not be imputed to you. It will be seen that you lament more than others that a system steady, dignified, and consistent is too elevated for the low and selfish views we entertain, and requires more force and vigor than our feeble, disjointed machinery possesses. You can only *propose* what is fit: you must execute what is prescribed, and leave the rest to Heaven.

Your faithful G. Cabot.

Cabot to Wolcott.

(*Private.*)

Brookline, Jan. 16, 1800.

My dear Sir, — Mr. Ames passed last evening with me: he is to pronounce the eulogy of Washington before our State Legislature three weeks hence. I hope he will weave into it as much as possible of his own politics: they are such as Washington approved, and I hardly know what greater praise can be given him than a display of this fact.

I have viewed and reviewed, again and again, the picture you

[1] Left blank in manuscript.

have drawn. I wished to discover that you had thrown over it an air of gloom darker than the truth, but I believe it is a verisimilitude in every particular.

From the moment the mission to France was announced, it was to be foreseen that the President would part wider and wider from every active, firm friend of the *anti-Jacobin* policy, which had been with infinite difficulty just established. It was to be foreseen that, a direct attack of external enemies being no longer dreaded, no sufficient reason could be offered to the people for subjecting them to the burden of armies and taxes, always odious when first imposed, and only submitted to from a conviction of indispensable necessity so plain and obvious that no one can dispute its existence. Every sagacious man, however, must discover that, while the *appearance* of danger has diminished, its *reality* has increased, and thus we are thrown back into a state of peril and embarrassment similar to that we were in several years ago. The difficulty then was to make the people sensible of the nature and extent of the dangers to which the country was exposed, and to arouse a sufficient indignation to repel it. When they were *almost* persuaded, a measure was adopted which contradicted all that had been taught, and repressed the rising spirit. Should the mission now fail and France be insolent, it will be in vain to address the people's resentments upon a subject on which their passions have already evaporated. But, be all this as it may, it is not the less incumbent on the government to provide for the public safety by all the means in their power. Whatever may be the obstacles to an army, they ought to be overcome: the whole world is becoming military; and, if we are wholly otherwise, we shall be as sheep among wolves. Indeed, we shall have wolves enough within our own fold, if we cannot keep up our guards.

I have more than once been informed that Mr. Pitt has expressed in the British cabinet his willingness to make peace, but has been overruled. I have accounted to myself for this circumstance, so extraordinary in a man of his inflexibility, by supposing that *he alone* felt the extreme difficulty of providing the means to support the war. If the similarity of situations can be supposed to have biassed your opinions, I should not wonder; for, notwithstanding our boasted resources actually existing, such is the machinery by which they are to be drawn forth, that an American financier has not greatly an advantage over the British. The acquiescence in the

direct tax is such as I hope will encourage the Federalists to make it permanent. But why should not some of the import duties be greatly increased? Half a dollar upon every fifty-six pounds of salt would be an excellent tax. The article is bulky and imported: evasion is therefore difficult. It is of universal use, and therefore the tax would be productive. Though not perfectly equal, it is as much so, probably, as any tax can be; and, if it be punctually and perpetually paid, the inequality will be almost annihilated by the incessant operation of well-known principles. I see no objection to doubling the duties on tea, and raising them considerably on coffee and sugar. There is certainly no reason why these and many articles should not be taxed as high as they will bear *without encouraging smuggling*. This is a limit very important to be known. I am not enough in the world to know what passes openly, still less clandestinely; but I have always entertained great fears on this point. So far as I have known the opinions which have prevailed, smuggling appears to have been deemed infamous. Whatever has been practised must therefore have been hidden from the citizens as well as the revenue officers, and very few men, probably, have been hardy enough to hazard the disgrace; but we have had a tide of commercial prosperity constantly flowing: this must turn, and the *auri sacra fames* will then subdue many scruples. The selection of taxes is a choice among difficulties; and it abundantly appears, I think, that indirect taxes, as they are called, are the most tolerable, and therefore these must be carried as high as they can be collected. Doubtless new and additional guards will become requisite; but, as it becomes more and more understood that all smuggling is paid for by the fair trader, I think a pretty vigorous system may be established. From the *money-loving* character of our people as well as from the nature of our government, I have always thought the revenues are to be principally secured by the force of *pecuniary* penalties. If these can be so contrived that they cannot be avoided, but shall be *always* dreaded by those who offend, I think the offenders will be few and the revenue safe. My object would be to have penalties *certain* rather than excessive, and subject to no limitation of time or place which should bar full proof.

Your view of continental Europe is more unfavorable and much more profound than my imagination had formed. Doubtless the selfishness of the German Emperor is a bar to the exertions of

the conquered States. A glorious opportunity has been lost to destroy the power of Jacobinism. So much depends on opinion, that the success of the campaign in Italy would have armed half of Europe against France and half of France against the usurpers, if the coalition had acted fairly, on principles entirely just and had supported faithfully their first enterprises. Suwarrow had consumed his army by employing them in the service he had to perform; he was exhausted, though always victorious; and as he approached France, where was the main body of his enemies, he was almost alone. But will not the adversity which closes the campaign operate to unite more closely and effectually the three great powers?

I confess to you nothing can exceed my chagrin at seeing a campaign, which promised every thing to my hopes, produce so little. Still, however, it has produced something of value: it has proved to the terrified people of various countries that their oppressors are not immortal, and that whoever opposes them with courage will defeat them. It has shown France incapable of such great efforts as she made for several successive years, when she easily sent forth eight or ten hundred thousand soldiers to plunder and destroy those who refused to be her willing slaves. She has this year manifested great anxiety for the safety of her revolutionary system, and has been unable to command five hundred thousand for her own defence. The recall of several great leaders from Egypt indicates an abandonment of all hope of any success in that quarter, and probably was in part occasioned by a want of the name and talents of some of them and the support of their united partisans.

I do not, therefore, yet despair of reaping next year the golden harvest I vainly expected at this time. The success in Holland may tempt the French once more to expose their fleet. They have strong inducements; and, if they yield to them, England will probably be reinvigorated by another naval victory.

G. Cabot.

Cabot to Gore.

Jan. 21, 1800.

My dear Sir, — Long before this will reach you, Mr. Payne[1] will have arrived, and informed you of the state of things here. They have grown something worse since he departed. The tide of

[1] Mr. Gore's son-in-law.

wealth which had flowed so long has considerably ebbed, and the effect of this change has become visible in every thing. Property has fallen in price; real estates, especially, are not worth so much by twenty per cent as three months ago. Our politics have declined as much as our commercial wealth. The *most sensible Federalists* are generally silent. They would offend, if they spoke freely what they think. With all their circumspection, they are denounced however as oligarchical, as aiming at a dictatorship over the executive. Your old friend Otis is said to be worshipping at the Presidential shrine; and there are those who charge him with sinister views, those who think that he would even go into the department of state, if the intractability of the present incumbent should provoke his dismissal, &c. But you must reject these slanders.

The present House of Representatives in Congress is composed of a greater number of Federalists than any former one, but they are uncemented, and will do less than their predecessors to promote the common weal. You may see by their answer to the speech how they are embarrassed. In order to satisfy Mr. Marshall and the Southern Federalists, it was necessary to *appear* satisfied with the mission; and in order to please others, perhaps all the true Federalists, it was necessary to withhold all praise of the measure. Hence an awkward circumlocutory phraseology resulted, which, while it seemed to approve, does not *really* approve the step.

In the mean time, the honest but uninformed part of the community is perplexed and confounded. At one time, they are told that France is so enfeebled that she can no longer inspire fear, and that she will make peace on such terms as the coalesced powers may choose to offer her. Again, they are told that peace is impracticable, and that the allies, grown insolent from success, are greatly to be feared, and that prudence requires every opposition to be made to them to preserve the balance of power. But at this moment it is discovered that the coalition is at an end and triumphant, and that France, instead of being provoked, should be amused and conciliated. Thus our speculations vary, and every arrival discloses to us a new reason for the mission to France.

Unhappily, the Federalists of the North do not agree with those of the South. The former have pretty generally expressed an open disapprobation, while the latter have as openly vindicated the mission to France. The antis of Virginia maintain that the Presi-

dent has been compelled by the force of public opinion to attempt a negotiation which he means should fail, from the improper character of the persons he employed and the inadmissible terms he has probably demanded. They confess, however, he has done well in a partial yielding to the popular voice, and they trust to the magnanimity of France to do the rest. France knows, they say, the depressed condition of the true republicans in the United States under the present administration, and will therefore accommodate her behavior to the present exigency, and thus keep open the door for a complete restoration of friendship *by-and-by*, if it cannot be effected now. On the other hand, the Southern Federalists have been driven to defend the mission as *wise*, *sincere*, and *well-timed*, and say, if it fail, all men must admit it a full proof of the moderation of our government and the injustice and hostile designs of France.

You see General Marshall leads in Congress. He doubtless has great talents and I believe great virtues; but I fear he is not yet a politician,[1] and has much to learn on the subject of *practicable* theories of free government.

It is long since I have heard from you. Doubtless you have great disasters to relate, but I indulge the hope that the misfortunes which have closed the campaign will produce a more effectual combination and greater exertions the next season. Such one would suppose to be the tendency. Austria must now see that a selfish policy has ruined every thing at the same time that enough has been done to prove to all parties that France can be thoroughly beaten, if the allies do their best. I have written Mr. King something like what is written here, yesterday, which will go by a different ship.

I beg you to believe me always your unfeigned friend,[2]

G. C.

Cabot to Wolcott.

Brookline, Feb. 28, 1800.

My dear Sir, — I presume you have learned that the King of Denmark has joined the coalition, and that a treaty is negotiating

[1] We must remember that politican had a somewhat different sense in 1800 from that which it now bears. By "politician," Mr. Cabot meant one versed in public policy and the practical arts of state-craft and government.

[2] This letter gives a painfully exact description of the difficulties and distractions by which, thanks to their own dissensions, the Federalists were at this time beset.

at Stockholm with a view to engage Sweden. It is determined, if this can be accomplished by England and Russia, to treat other powers who shall trade with France as *accomplices*.

Talleyrand was taken under the consular patronage upon the belief that the envoys from the United States were on their passage to France. It is hoped in England that Suwarrow will be largely reinforced, and with the addition of a German division will act on the Rhine, and that Austria will act separately. Doubtless, if the Emperor of Germany is so disposed, the allies may carry all before them; but our past experience does not authorize us to expect the sincerity and good faith which the interest of all requires.

I remain your much obliged and affectionate friend,

GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO GORE.

MARCH 27, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR, — I owe you a thousand letters which I shall never pay; and, if a bankrupt law should pass for this species of debtors, I resolve to take advantage of it, and defraud you of your dues. A few days ago we received the constitution of Buonaparte & Co. for the year 1800. It would be a waste of time to examine the merits of any thing so transient and so useless as a French constitution. Its design is doubtless to amuse the nation while their masters fleece them. But I am *delighted* with Lord Grenville's note to the infamous Jesuitical Talleyrand.[1] It breathes a noble disdain which every man of English blood ought to feel. You must allow me still to admire this nation, who have, *except ourselves*, the best people and the best government in the world. Without as much urbanity as they ought to have, they have more good principles and better habits than others. They have as much

[1] As soon as Napoleon had seized upon the supreme power, he made overtures of peace to England. Lord Grenville declined these overtures, on the ground that England waged a purely defensive war in behalf of herself and her allies, and for the security of "property, personal liberty, social order, and religious freedom." As long as the system of attacking the very existence of civil society was adhered to by France, Lord Grenville said England would never make peace. He did not consider that the advent of Napoleon and his usurpation of power gave any sufficient pledge in itself for the abandonment of the revolutionary system. This bold and determined note of Lord Grenville is given in full in Alison's History of Europe, IV. 94, 95. See also Thiers, Histoire du Consulat, 52, 64.

liberty as they can manage, and more than any other people of Europe can immediately bear, while their government is as just as any and more energetic.[1]

You will have learned by the newspapers that Truxton has lately acquired great honor in pursuing, attacking, and beating an enemy which he must have known to be his superior in force.[2] Our little navy has, on the whole, done great service; our commerce is immense, and it is pretty well protected.

I can give you no information of domestic politics, for I have scarcely known of any thing passing beyond the limits of my own farm these several weeks. Strong and Gerry are the gubernatorial candidates: the first would doubtless be a great acquisition, and the second an injury to the cause of good government; but you are not to conclude that the former will of a *certainty* be elected. It is highly probable, but the advantage of Presidential favor is in favor of the latter.[3] Delicacy or a mistaken policy prevented a public discussion of the conduct of Mr. Gerry: in consequence, he is less censured than he deserves to be among the small Federalists.

Notwithstanding the despondency you sometimes feel, it seems to me that there is good ground to expect that England will persist in her hostility to Jacobinism until the force of the sect is destroyed.

Yours truly, G. C.

Cabot to Wolcott.

Brookline, May 26, 1800.

My dear Sir, — While I feel the highest indignation at the unmerited treatment of Mr. Pickering, I feel no less regret at the necessity he *supposes* it has created for him to go again into

[1] For views like these, Mr. Cabot and men who felt as he did were termed a "British faction." To-day they appear sensible and proper enough; but they were then regarded with sentiments of horror, and those who held such opinions were denounced by the Democrats as monarchists at heart, and enemies of the republic.

[2] Truxton's defeat of the French frigate "L'Insurgente." This was the first of the exploits of our navy, as Truxton was the first of our naval heroes. He had the misfortune, however, to be a Federalist; and Jefferson seized the first opportunity to rid the naval service and the country of him and his obnoxious politics.

[3] The election resulted in the choice of Strong by a majority of about twenty-five hundred. The opposition, however, showed much more strength than was generally anticipated.

the wilderness. Mr. Pickering's friends and family connections are greatly distressed at the idea of his undertaking new settlements at his time of life, and with a large family; and they have deputed Mr. Timothy Williams, nephew of Mr. Pickering, to go to Philadelphia, and dissuade him, if possible, from executing his project. I have desired Mr. Williams, who is a sensible and respectable man, to call on you for such advice and information as he may need. You can probably inform him whether Mr. Pickering would be likely to find employment sufficiently lucrative in the banks, insurance companies, or any other great corporation at Philadelphia. I recollect some years ago, when Mr. Hamilton was Secretary of the Treasury, you were often spoken of as a suitable president for the bank of the United States; and at that time I have no doubt, if you had chosen the office, you would have had it with a handsome salary. If any thing similar is attainable now, I think you must know it; and I should imagine Mr. Pickering's claims would be admitted by every good man.

Excuse my troubling you on this occasion, which interests every friend to virtue, to justice, or the government.

Your faithful friend, GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BROOKLINE, May 26, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR, — Mr. Williams, knowing the interest I take in whatever concerns you, has put into my hands the letter in which you speak of the President's conduct toward you, and your intended migration. Every honest mind will feel indignant at such unmerited treatment, wherever it is known. But permit me to ask whether it is absolutely necessary that you subject yourself again to all the hardships and sufferings which are inseparable from a new settlement in the wilderness? I don't rely much upon the gratitude of society, and therefore should not expect your just claims to avail; but I cannot be persuaded that your well-known talents and qualities would remain long unemployed and unsought for in Philadelphia. I have conversed with Judge Dana and some other friends on this topic, and all agree that you ought not to withdraw from the world until a fair experiment shall prove it to be necessary. This it is believed will never happen. If nothing better occurs, why should you not convert your lands into money, and once more

try your fortune in trade? I have no doubt that, as a commission merchant, you would find more encouragement than formerly, and it would soon bring forward the talents of some of your sons. At any rate, I think you ought not to encounter the labors and self-denials of the frontiers until one year's trial of what can be done on the sea-board. Wherever you may be, and whatever you finally decide to undertake, you will have my ardent prayers for your happiness, and that of all about you, in which sentiment Mrs. Cabot most cordially unites.

Your faithful friend, GEORGE CABOT.

HAMILTON TO CABOT.[1]

HEADQUARTERS, Oxford, June 11, 1800.

SIR, — It is just reported to me that, among the means of paying the troops which have been transmitted to this place, there is a treasury draft on the collector at Portsmouth for five thousand dollars. Without this sum, the troops cannot be put in possession of their dues; and a recourse to the collector would be attended with considerable delay. It would therefore be necessary to keep an entire regiment here for some time, and thus an expense of some importance would be incurred by the public. Under this view of the subject, I trust you will deem it expedient to advance the money and take the draft on the collector of Portsmouth. In doing so, you will particularly oblige the army, and render a service to the government. The consideration of the loan you can arrange hereafter with the Treasury Department.

With consideration, &c., A. HAMILTON.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, June 14, 1800.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have more than once spoken of your situation in the government to men whom you already esteem, and to others whom you would esteem, if you knew them. They all agree that you fulfil a *high but difficult duty* in remaining at

[1] This letter was an official one, addressed to Mr. Cabot in his capacity of President of the Office of Discount and Deposit of the United States Bank, Boston. Mr. Cabot had accepted this post at the time of Hamilton's secretaryship. See p. 73.

your post, while the public good so strongly demands it. Whatever may be your apprehensions, I hope you will see the issue of the presidential election before you decide on any new course of life. It is not easy to answer satisfactorily the question, "how far the influential men in Massachusetts will go in attempting to save the declining cause?" You may, however, rely upon it that the *most influential men* think as you do upon the nature of our difficulties, and the remedy for them. It is one of the evils incidental to popular systems, that the best friends of government feel themselves obliged to conceal the defects and magnify the good qualities of those who administer public affairs. A reputation and degree of personal power is by this means acquired, which may be used for wrong purposes, and cannot be suddenly counteracted. A perfect silence has been observed in Massachusetts until very lately on the caprices, ill-humor, selfishness, and extreme vanity of a man who with these faults and weaknesses possesses some good qualities, great talents for unpolitical speculation, and has rendered some important services. Many good men had the fear, as you know, that Mr. Adams would make wild steerage, if placed at the helm, notwithstanding he had written well on the subject of political navigation; but those men suppressed their opinions, and co-operated with others in giving praise as often as they could, and thus contributed to strengthen the public sentiment in his favor. Thus his fame is in some sort interwoven with the web of the national government. Local ideas also concur to unite them in the minds of the people here, so that every attempt to separate them is ill received. I think, however, that, if electors were now to be appointed, they would vote unanimously for Adams and Pinckney. Our Legislature have taken this business into their own hands; and, although they do not wish to see Mr. Adams discarded, I am satisfied they would not hazard the mischief of having Mr. Jefferson elected by wasting a *single* Federal vote. Every moment brings me new proof that the opinion extends itself of the propriety of uniting *all* our votes with the Federalists of other States, as the only measure by which the government can be preserved. Having thus given you my own single opinion, I ought to suggest my apprehension that great pains will be taken in the course of the summer to rouse the passions and prejudices of our people in various ways, and bring them to bear upon the Legislature in such a manner as to deter them from pursuing their own measures on principles which ought

to govern. Events abroad, too, may be of a kind to be convertible to the same purposes. All these and other contingencies are deductions from present estimates which you will naturally make. On the whole, I trust the good sense of New England will see its interest, and will not sacrifice it to the views of any individual.

Yours faithfully and affectionately, GEORGE CABOT.

PICKERING TO CABOT.[1]

PHILADELPHIA, June 16, 1800.

DEAR SIR, — While McKean's election was pending, it was given out that, if he should be chosen governor of Pennsylvania, the insurgents would be pardoned, and many other *good things* done for the *patriots* and *true republicans*.[2] McKean was with the President shortly before the pardons issued, and I am assured spent many hours with him the preceding afternoon. The Jacobins, far from giving the President any credit for his "clemency," ascribe the pardons (and justly) to political views. I have been told that Fries manifested his "penitence" by reviling the government as soon as he was set at liberty.

A day or two before the President set off for the city of Washington, a gentleman in conversation with him mentioned the dismission of one Jacob Mayer, consul of the United States at Cape François, whom he (the gentleman) had supposed a deserving man. "Why [said the President], he slandered Colonel Pickering, and had the audacity to charge him with being concerned in the 'Kingston's' cargo; and therefore I removed him!" And yet I was told (since my removal from office) that in his private companies I was the constant theme of the President's abuse during the whole of the last winter!

[1] The copy of this letter in the Pickering MSS. only professes to give extracts from the original, but I think every thing essential is preserved.

[2] This refers to Fries, the most prominent leader in the Northampton insurrection, who was found guilty, and sentenced to death. President Adams pardoned him, and his action was attributed by his enemies to political motives. However much the advisability of pardoning Fries, when condemned on two trials for treason, may be questioned, no one can doubt that the motives of Mr. Adams were of the purest and most honorable kind. That a political significance should have been attached to this act of executive clemency was from the circumstances of the times unfortunate and unjust, but still inevitable.

You will doubtless, have seen Mr. Goodhue, and heard him recite in substance the conversation between the President and him on May 9, the day preceding the President's notice to me to resign. Mr. Goodhue omitted some things. I recollect he told me next morning that, among other accusations against the "damned faction," the President said, "And you crammed Hamilton down my throat."

In the dialogue between the President and Mr. McHenry, you will see an evidence of what Wolcott and I have more than once said to each other, that the President is destitute of sincerity; you will see that while he has so many times been pronouncing, in strong language, Washington's praise, his heart was strong with envy at the mention of his name. In the same dialogue, he pronounced a panegyric upon Jefferson, and, comparing him with Hamilton, he said: "Mr. Jefferson is an infinitely better man, a wiser one I am sure; and, if President, will act wisely. I know it, and would sooner be Vice-President under him, or even minister resident at the Hague, than be indebted to such a being as Hamilton for the Presidency."

Yet, a short time before my removal, in conversing with the President, I mentioned Mr. Jefferson's letter to Sir John Sinclair, describing the mould-board, of which I sent you a model, and repeated the substance of Mr. Jefferson's political observations with which he concluded the letter. Upon which I remarked that I supposed Mr. Jefferson to be a very learned man, "but certainly he is a very visionary man." The President answered, "Why, yes, he has a certain kind of learning in philosophy, &c., but *very little of that which is necessary for a statesman.*"

That he would readily serve as Vice-President under Mr. Jefferson. I assured Mr. Wolcott two months ago; and I believe that his coalition with Mr. Jefferson (of which I entertain no doubt) has taken place with the view of securing that station, seeing he despaired of being chosen President; and probably Jefferson and his friends flattered him with hopes of a *lift* from their party.

In the course of my correspondence with General Washington in 1798, in which I informed him of the President's hatred of Hamilton, and stated the necessity of his (General Washington's) direct interposition to prevent Hamilton's degradation and Knox's elevation, I used this expression: "I respect the President for many great and excellent qualities; but I cannot respect his errors,

his prejudices, or his passions." I have regretted that my opinion then expressed should have unavoidably changed; that subsequently I had reason to retract it, and to deny him the useful qualities of an ordinary statesman. I had then no conception that vanity, ambition, and avarice could so blunt the moral sense of a man, who had so long sustained a fair reputation, as to render him capable of base, dishonorable, and dishonest conduct in the administration of public affairs. Instead of resentment for his treatment of me, I lament, for the sake of human nature and civil society, the degeneracy of such a man; a man grown gray in the public service, and who, with all his foibles, was esteemed the constant, firm patriot and upright man. The measure he took to color, at least to his own mind, the pardon of the three insurgents, which I have described in my letter to Mr. Gore, is such an outrage on decency, propriety, justice, and sound policy as stamps the man with indelible disgrace, and demonstrates his unfitness for any public trust.

When I spoke of the consul Mayer, I intended to have informed you that on authentic documents I stated to the President, in a formal report, the baseness, falsehood, and infamy of the man, and the necessity of his immediate removal from the consulship. He had slandered Doctor Stevens, the consul-general for St. Domingo, and embarrassed him in the exercise of his functions; he had openly and repeatedly declared that Wolcott and I were concerned in the ship "Kingston's" cargo, and *insinuated* that the *President also* had been dabbling. For *these reasons*, the fellow was dismissed, and not (as the President was willing to make the gentleman before referred to believe) "for slandering Colonel Pickering, as honest a man as lived." Pardon these last six words, as they seemed necessary in this history of Presidential proceedings.

This report concerning *Mayer* I finished and sent to the President in the short interval between the transmission of my answer, in which I refused to *resign*, and the receipt of his reply, declaring my discharge from my office. And the case was so clear that, with my report, I sent the recommendations I had received of two candidates (there were no more) to succeed Mayer. The candidate I wished to have appointed was Henry Hammond (brother of Abijah Hammond, of New York), who was then at the Cape, and had been recommended by Dr. Stevens himself. The other candidate,

I believe, was a worthy man and very competent to the office; but, unfortunately for him, among his recommendations was one from *General Hamilton*, which was enough to defeat his wishes.

Referring to the uncertainty of the issue of the next election of President, whether Mr. Adams or Mr. Jefferson would be chosen, I thus expressed myself in a letter of 7 March last to my son John in London: "I am prepared for either event, — determined to act independently whether in or out of office. My only solicitude is for my children, that I may have it conveniently in my power to give them educations suited to their capacities and dispositions, &c. For the rest, though ashamed to *beg*, I am willing and able to dig; and, if it were convenient to gratify my own inclinations, I would return to the calling of my ancestors, and become 'a tiller of the ground.' When the occasion occurs, I shall do it without reluctance."

JUNE 17, 1800.

P. S. Mr. McHenry thinks it ineligible to have *the dialogue* communicated by copies, though he would have no objection to a confidential reading by gentlemen meriting confidence, &c.

WOLCOTT TO CABOT.

PHILADELPHIA, June 18, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR, — On my return from Connecticut two days since, I received your letter of May 26, when I had the pleasure of being introduced to Mr. Williams by Colonel Pickering. I have conversed with him on the subject of his private affairs, and have tendered him my services. He remains of opinion that it is best for him to attempt a settlement upon his new lands. You may, I believe, rest assured that this determination has been formed with deliberation, and that his mind is not in the least depressed by the cruel treatment he has received.

I wrote a letter to Mr. Ames from Hartford, which I desired him to show to you. Whatever may be thought of my sentiments, I think it right to communicate them to my friends. It is probable the same opinions will be more generally entertained than avowed; but, if General Pinckney is not elected, all good men will find cause to regret the present inaction of the Federal party. It is at least in their power to defend their principles, and to assume a position in which, if defeated, they may avoid dishonor.

It is with grief and humiliation, but at the same time with perfect confidence, that I declare that no administration of the government of President Adams could be successful. His prejudices are too violent, and his resentments of men of influence are too keen to render it possible that he should please either party; and we all know that he does not possess and cannot command the talents, fortitude, and constancy necessary to the formation of a new party.

The facts upon which these opinions are founded are not generally known to the Federalists, although they are well understood by our adversaries; and this circumstance constitutes our principal danger. There is nothing said in defence of the government which is understood by the people. The newspapers, on our side, are filled with toasts and nonsensical paragraphs, attributing wisdom and firmness to the President; while, at the same time, all confidence is destroyed by the skilful attacks of a vindictive and intelligent opposition.

I am no advocate for rash measures, and know that public opinion cannot be suddenly changed; but it is clear to my mind that we shall never find ourselves in the straight road of Federalism while Mr. Adams is President. If, however, sensible men think otherwise, he will be supported; for I shall certainly admit that a change ought not to be attempted, except upon the clearest evidence.

The beginning of the next week I shall proceed to Washington, where I will endeavor to do as much good and as little mischief as possible. It would, however, be an affectation of insensibility to pretend that I do not expect to suffer much unhappiness, knowing, as I well do, that the whole vengeance of the party will be exerted against the Treasury department, and that the views of certain individuals, whom I do not yet consider as Jacobins, will be promoted by destroying my character, if possible. The engines for effecting these purposes are prepared, and the operations have commenced. Some of the clerks in the offices either of the auditor, comptroller, or register, will continue to furnish extracts from the files and records, which will be published and misrepresented in Duane's paper. Unjust as the accusations will be, both in respect to myself and the other officers of the department, they will make a considerable impression, and I shall be held accountable for frauds which I could not prevent, and for errors which others have committed.

I must state one instance in point: Mr. Dayton,[1] as Speaker, called for thirty-three thousand dollars at the close of the session in July, 1798. The money was advanced on his written application, for the compensation of the House of Representatives. It was impossible for me to know that the whole sum was not wanted; and I ought certainly to presume, as I did presume, that any balance which might remain unexpended would be instantly refunded. Mr. Dayton, however, on various pretexts, neglected to settle his accounts till last winter, when it was discovered that a balance of more than eighteen thousand dollars had been retained by him since July, 1798.

The day I was informed of it I called on Mr. Dayton, and represented the nature and tendency of his conduct. I afterwards wrote him a private letter, and during the session recovered the money for the public. The accounts have, by some means not to be discovered, been copied for Duane, and published in the "Aurora," with most insolent accusations of my conduct. As Dayton cannot be defended, his breach of trust will attach suspicion to the officers of the treasury, and to every man who has an account open with the public, and of course the sums accounted for will be plausibly represented as sums which have been embezzled. Part of Colonel Pickering's accounts are unsettled, and he has been attacked in the most indecent manner, although I am certain that not a cent of money has been applied improperly. This, indeed, appears from his accounts, which have lately been rendered for settlement. OLIVER WOLCOTT.

N. B. What think you of the answer[2] to the Alexandria dinner-makers? Ought not the last war with Great Britain to be considered as having been terminated by the treaty of peace?

O. W.

[1] Jonathan Dayton, of New Jersey, member of Congress and afterwards senator from that State. He was Speaker of the House from 1795–99. He was arrested for complicity in Burr's treason, but was not proceeded against.

[2] This refers to a reply to an address from Alexandria, in which Mr. Adams alluded to the revolution, to the outrages by the English, and to his own and the people's spirit of resistance. (See Works of John Adams, IX. 233.) Wolcott evidently looked on the address as but another appeal to the latent hatred of the English, and as directed — though not in so many words — against his wing of the party.

Cabot to Wolcott.

Brookline, July 20, 1800.

My dear Sir, — Mr. Ames put into my hands the letter you wrote from Hartford; and I have since received your favor of the 28th June, from Philadelphia. Let me repeat to you now the wish which is daily expressed by your friends here, that you will not quit the Treasury while a just sense of character *will permit* you to remain. Doubtless, a man may act independently in office as well as out; and he can only be made responsible for his own individual opinions and those acts which he approves. If you were out of office, you would not wholly avoid the anxiety which you now feel for the national welfare and the dignity of the government; and, although you would escape some mortifications, I doubt, on the whole, whether you would then allow them so much weight as you do now. It is and must be the fate of every man of sensibility to suffer in the public service in proportion to his usefulness. If the cause of the present chagrin were removed, I apprehend no less would proceed from other causes inherent in our system. I lament that, for the sake of the public and for your own sake, you were not born under Saturn instead of Mercury, and that your nativity was not in Germany, where a good stock of phlegm would have been nourished in your constitution; but these things cannot be altered, and it only remains to accommodate to them. The public feeling is opposed to the censure of Mr. Adams in this quarter. Some good men are very reluctant to admit his unfitness for his office, because to admit it is to admit the necessity of a change, which involves the idea of disorder, discord, and turbulence, which they desire to avoid. It is impossible, however, that Mr. Adams should govern *as a Federal man*, and this must be seen presently by all sagacious men who attend to political affairs. It is evident Mr. Adams calculates upon engaging the force of the passions and prejudices of the populace on his side, and with this reinforcement to overcome or beat down his Federal opponents. He has lately toasted men whom he has hated or despised these fifteen years; and I am told he talks of his late friends as men either afraid of the English, for which they ought to be treated as cowards, or devoted to the English, for which they ought to be branded as infamous. But, for himself, he sees no evil to be apprehended from a war with England, and is ready to meet it. I

do not think it much proof of the courage or philosophy of a man to be indifferent to the danger and sufferings of others, especially if he may be likely to profit by them himself. I readily conceive that Mr. Adams, by rousing the spirit of animosity against the English, which only sleeps in the bosoms of our people, may secure his re-election, and a double portion of power with it. This suspicion is so natural, that it will be felt by many men who know how much we have to lose and how little to gain by a war with England. Great efforts are making to persuade our people that they ought to throw away votes at the election, lest Mr. Pinckney should be made President; but no satisfactory opinion can yet be formed of what Massachusetts will do. If it could be made to appear that the election of General Pinckney would secure our internal tranquillity, our Legislature would, I think, appoint electors who would contribute all in their power to the attainment of that object; but it is seen that, if Mr. Pinckney is chosen, he will enjoy but little support from those who are now devoted to Mr. Adams. Perhaps he will be opposed by them, and doubtless he will be opposed by the Jacobins. There are even men among the Federalists who prefer Jefferson to a *Federal* rival of Mr. Adams, and there are some certainly who would prefer Mr. Jefferson to Adams. The motives of these various parties are too obvious to need explaining. There seems to me to be only one sufficient reason for the good men to exert themselves in favor of Mr. Pinckney in preference to both the others; and that is, in case of success, they will then be again where such men must always wish to be, — *arranged with their chief on the side of the Constitution and the laws.*

I have not yet waited on the President, and I *think* I shall not. When a man in his station attempts to render odious those who differ from him by imputations which he cannot possibly believe, he certainly discharges them from all obligation of *extra*ordinary respect. At present, therefore, I feel at liberty to stay at home, though perhaps I am not bound to.

With unfeigned esteem and respect, I remain

Your faithful friend, G. CABOT.

Cabot to Hamilton.

Brookline, Aug. 10, 1800.

My dear Sir, — Your letter of the 1st did not reach me until last evening. The enclosure shall be transmitted to-morrow or the day following, by some trusty person who will attend the levee, if one can be found who will engage to deliver it; otherwise, I may perhaps send it in the regular package which goes from the post-office.

This method would be better than to send a servant, who might be obliged to deliver it to another servant.[1]

There is no reason to doubt the first course will be pursued, and I shall not delay to inform you of the delivery as soon as it is ascertained.

Although I cannot but feel unhappy at the gloomy prospect of our public affairs, yet I do not feel my usual degree of solicitude for the issue of the election. There is *something* like a balance of advantages and disadvantages in the success of either of the three candidates.

Mr. Adams will doubtless continue to sacrifice the independent Federalists so long as he finds victims who will be acceptable to those whose favor he courts.

He will also hazard a war with Great Britain, which he evidently thinks would be no injury *to him;* but, if he has justly forfeited the confidence of the country, he has not yet actually lost it in this quarter, and the men who adhere to him while they zealously sustain him are also a restraint upon him, and for some time at least may prevent his worst measures, and until they have given him up will not *cordially* support another.

Jefferson's election would tend to reunite the Federal party; and if it is evidently effected by the Jacobin force unaided by any other, or, if aided at all, by the adherents of Mr. Adams, the reunion of our old friends would be complete.

Should Mr. Pinckney be elected, he would be opposed by Mr. Adams and his warm adherents, and would be heartily supported by those only who are now detached from Mr. Adams. This state of things would be unpropitious to Mr. Pinckney's administration.

[1] The enclosure here referred to was Hamilton's first letter, inquiring whether Mr. Adams had accused him of belonging to a "British faction." See Hamilton's Works, VI. 440.

There is, however, one unanswerable reason for wishing Mr. Pinckney to succeed, and that is that the best, and, indeed, all the truly good men would find themselves in their proper places, arranged under the banners of the Constitution and laws, on the side of the national chief.

The question has been asked, whether, if the Federalists cannot carry their first points, they would not do well to turn the election from Jefferson to Burr. They conceive Burr to be less likely to look to France for support than Jefferson, provided he could be supported at home. They consider Burr as actuated by ordinary ambition, Jefferson by that and the pride of the Jacobinic philosophy. The former may be satisfied by power and property, the latter must see the roots of our society pulled up and a new course of cultivation substituted.

Certainly it would have been fortunate for the United States if the second candidate on the Jacobin side had been one who might be safely trusted.

No great progress has been made in convincing people of the propriety of voting for Pinckney with *all* our strength; yet I believe if it shall appear clearly that Adams will fail, and that Pinckney may be elected, our Legislature will act properly, especially if there is no just imputation of unfairness against Mr. Pinckney's friends.

I am told New Hampshire will vote for Adams and Pinckney, but that Rhode Island will sooner give some votes for Jefferson than all for Pinckney.

I am, with increasing esteem and attachment,

Your faithful friend, GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO HAMILTON.

BROOKLINE, Aug. 21, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR, — An exposition of the reasons which influence many men of unquestionable patriotism and loyalty to withhold from Mr. Adams the confidence he once enjoyed may be useful, by satisfying the intelligent and candid part of the public that those men act, as they have ever done, on genuine national principles. The reasons are strong, and require only to be placed in a clear light; but this must be done with infinite care and circumspection, that neither anger nor *jealousy* may be excited. It must be done in a manner that shall clear up the doubts which now exist, of the

sincerity and consistency of the party who promote the *union* of *votes* for Adams and Pinckney. It is perceived by Mr. Adams's personal friends that, while the party profess a zealous desire to unite *all* the Federal votes for Adams and Pinckney, there are many, or at least some, individuals among those who compose it, whose *wishes* are known to be that the election may issue in favor of Mr. Pinckney, and therefore it is inferred such persons will not act and do not aim as they profess. To this charge it is generally answered, "that without a union of all the Federalists neither Mr. Adams nor Mr. Pinckney can probably be chosen, but that with such a union one may probably be President and the other Vice-President, and, considering all the circumstances of the case, the chance and the *preponderance of wishes* are in favor of Mr. *Adams;*" "that although there may be many, and doubtless are some, individuals who would think it by no means propitious to the national welfare that Mr. Adams should be re-elected, yet they yield to the superior consideration of *union*, by which alone Jefferson can be kept out and Adams or Pinckney put into the office; and therefore these men act and will act fairly toward Mr. Adams, giving him all their support, upon the *just expectation* of a similar support to Mr. Pinckney from those who prefer Mr. Adams;" "that the plan formed at Philadelphia to support both was a compromise, which contemplated Mr. Adams as President, but liable, however, to be superseded by Pinckney from the nature of the election;" and "that good faith would and ought to be observed as the only means of success and as the *only ground of content after success.*" Such is the tenor of our language to the public: we think it true, and we shall be greatly embarrassed if, at this late period, after our sentiments are extensively known, there should be a new or different ground taken. You must allow me, therefore, to *insist* that, whatever display is made of Mr. Adams's misconduct, *it must be continually recollected that he may be again chosen by us, and that we are pledged to give him the full chance of the united vote concerted at Philadelphia.*

So that whatever is said against him must be explicitly avowed to be the complaint of those of us who have yielded individual opinions to the general opinion of the party as a matter of expediency, and not the language of the party. And it ought to be admitted that the party, from various considerations, rather prefer the election of Mr. Adams to Mr. Pinckney.

I understand, through a friend, that the Carolinians adhere to these ideas as they were digested and agreed to at Philadelphia.

Mr. Harper writes from Baltimore, the 11th inst., "that our friends may now count with some certainty, and very great certainty, on a unanimous vote for Adams and Pinckney in Maryland." Although I think some good may be derived from an exhibition of Mr. Adams's misconduct, yet I am well persuaded that you may do better than to put your name to it.

This might give it an interest with men who need no such interest; but it will be converted to a new proof that you are a *dangerous man*. Ames and I agree that you will give the enemy an advantage to which he has no claim.

In every situation, believe me obediently and faithfully yours,

GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO HAMILTON.

BROOKLINE, Aug. 23, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have shown to several of our wisest and best men a copy of what I wrote you on the 25th inst.

They all concur in the sentiments it contains: still, it is probably fit, and it may be indispensable, to expose Mr. Adams fully to the public. The countenance and authority given by him and his friends to the vile calumnies against us may strengthen their credit so much as to render them irrefutable without such an exposition.

I don't think, however, we can discard Mr. Adams as a candidate, at this late period, without total derangement and defeat in this quarter.

It is true there is an apparent absurdity in supporting a man whom we know to be unworthy of trust. It is a dilemma, however, into which we are brought by the proceedings at Philadelphia, and which *we* could not shun. Or perhaps it is a natural result of the mode of election, and could not have been avoided; but, be this as it may, we have considered as an agreed point among the Federalists that Adams and Pinckney are to be voted for together, and we accordingly have urged with great confidence that *this is the intention of the Federal party generally*, and that it is acquiesced in by most of those who are supposed to influence them. I think, therefore, you cannot omit to make a clear and explicit reference to this known state of things in whatever you may publish, and possi-

bly as a consequence of it to ground the publication chiefly on the necessity of it, to exculpate those whom it vindicates from the abominable charges, insinuations, and unmerited denunciations of Mr. Adams and some of his personal friends. Indeed, I see no impropriety in regretting that a compromise has been made which must be observed at every hazard, it being too manifest that Mr. Adams has relinquished the system he was chosen by the Federalists to support, and that he has become hostile, and will necessarily become more and more hostile, to the firm advocates of that system and all who adhere to it.

I think, however, it must be shown that the opposition to Mr. Adams is founded upon broad public principle. For myself, I often declare that the mission to France, though impolitic, unjustifiable, dangerous, and inconsistent; the expulsion of *able, upright*, and *faithful officers*,[1] though a ruinous precedent; the pardon of Fries, though a sacrifice of the safety as well as dignity of the State; that many other transactions of inferior magnitude, though shamefully wrong, yet that all these would not of themselves induce me to oppose the President's re-election, if I did not view them as evidence, explained and confirmed by other evidence, that he has abandoned the system he was chosen to maintain, and that he is likely to introduce its opposite with all its pernicious consequences as fast as he can, and as far as his influence will go.

If this idea is correct, as it appears to me, it cannot be too strongly impressed on the sound part of the public.

A long letter, full of good sense and instructing information, is just received from Mr. Wolcott. He thinks an examination of President Adams's administration has been so long delayed that it can only now be made to grow out of the unjust accusations of his present friends. This excellent letter has been read and admired by several persons whose judgment you respect, but whose opinions remain perfectly fixed that we cannot now change the arrangement: we are not strong enough to break up, and new form in the face of our enemy.

I have sent to Mr. Wolcott a copy of mine to you of the 25th, which will explain to him sufficiently *our* situation. Mr. Gordon tells me that New Hampshire's electors will all vote for Adams and Pinckney certainly, except one, of whom the same is probable, but not certain.

[1] [Since Mr. Pickering was expelled, the President has said of him to a gentleman, "as honest a man as ever lived." G. C.] See above, p. 277.

The persons for electors are supposed to be *predestinated* by the Legislature.

Colonel Burr is to be at Providence to-day. He probably may expect that, as Governor Fenner will vote for Jefferson, he may also be induced to vote for him. As he is a very sanguine man, he may expect even more. Yours faithfully,

GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, Aug. 23, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have read with great attention your letter of the 11th. Mr. Chief Justice Dana and Mr. Parsons have also given it a reading. As you probably see our newspapers, you must perceive that we have taken our course as we understood it to have been settled by our friends at Philadelphia. The enclosed copy of my letter to General Hamilton will explain to you the difficulties we apprehend from a disclosure of Mr. Adams's defects, *unless accompanied with suitable acknowledgments that he is to be supported as one of the candidates, notwithstanding those defects.* This apparent absurdity is only to be reconciled by the truth of the case and the necessity of mutual concession. I am, and have long been, as fully convinced as you are that Mr. Adams ought to have been abandoned by the Federal party, whom he had in fact sacrificed; but it seems a majority were not brought to this opinion in season, and the present half-way system was the consequence. I wish every Federalist, who can understand it, might read your excellent letter; and I wish to see a full but *calm* discussion of all the grounds of discontent with Mr. Adams, in a pamphlet or newspaper. But still I do not see how it will be practicable to discard Mr. Adams as a candidate, at this period, without confounding us in this quarter, and consequently exposing the whole party to a defeat. Besides, if Jefferson is to come in, is it not very important that he shall *not* have come in by any division among the Federalists? I fear we are too weak at best to face our enemy; but at any rate we are not strong enough to break up, and new form on the field of battle.

I have often contemplated the various issues of the election, and I see in each a considerable approximation of balance of advantage and disadvantage. General Pinckney is the only one from whom I should expect pure, honest, steady efforts to save the State. On

his side, the wise and good would be in their proper place; and, if they fail of doing all the good they wish, yet they could neither be destroyed nor disgraced. But it is too obvious that Mr. Adams and many with him will oppose the Pinckney administration, and *very many more support it coldly.*

A comment upon your letter would make a great book, and, if worthy of the text, would be invaluable. I shall for ever regret that the ideas it contains have not been communicated to every man of sense and honesty.

With sincere esteem and attachment, I remain as ever,

Yours faithfully, GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, September, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR, — At the desire of Mr. Gore, from whom it has just arrived, I enclose you a letter to Colonel Pickering, with a request that you will transmit it to him. You will see by our newspapers that the negotiation at Paris is broken off, and I think you will soon see such of its details as may tend to influence the Presidential election. The article from Paris is certainly intended for that purpose. The French say they will not treat with us, unless we put them on the same footing as the English; but, in the twenty-fifth article of Mr. Jay's treaty, we have stipulated that we will make no new treaty which shall give to a nation at war with England the advantage of our ports to shelter privateers, prizes, &c. Previous to the treaty of Mr. Jay, and afterward until the annulment of the French treaty, France had the same advantages over the English which she now complains the English have over her. Yet this did not prevent an equitable and amicable treaty being made by Mr. Jay. When we supposed ourselves in danger from the power and hostility of England, as in 1778, we reciprocated with France certain exclusive stipulations relative to maritime rights, which we then thought suited our condition. In 1794, we reciprocated with England similar stipulations, and which by the violations of France, in the face of our treaty with her, gives an efficacy to the stipulation, which it could never have had in relation to France. If this is inconvenient or injurious to France, it is her own fault. For we saved to her all the rights she enjoyed by treaty; and she wantonly, wickedly, and insolently violated that

same treaty by which she held them. If I were not too indolent, I would throw two or three of these ideas into the papers.

A gentleman, who saw Mr. Ellsworth the end of June, informs me that he expressed an opinion that it was best he and his colleagues should be where they were; that Austria probably would make peace, and England perhaps would not continue the war after the summer campaign ends; that if all others should adjust their differences, and ours remain unsettled, we might find it difficult to obtain terms that were just and reasonable. These sentiments are natural, but are they sound? What safety can be derived to us from a piece of parchment, if Buonaparte is able and disposed to disturb us? Does not our danger increase with his preponderance of power, and is not that preponderance increased by the extinction of our enmity? Is there any safety for any nation against the power and ambition of France, but in a power and disposition to resist them of themselves, or in concert with others? I think there is not; and I still hope that England thinks so, and will therefore revive the spirit of King William and Queen Anne's times, and make neither peace nor truce with France until her power is reduced.

I should be most happy to see you here, although I should expect to hear you denounced as an intriguer, if you were to visit us at this time. I am told, however, that to Mr. Parsons the President denies that he ever called us "British faction, or any of the hard names of which he has been accused." He does not recollect these intemperances, and thinks himself greatly misunderstood or misrepresented; he does not recollect to have used the expressions mentioned by Mr. Goodhue, and never spoke of the Essex Junto in the opprobrious terms charged against him. It seems, on the whole, he was disposed to moderation, and to be reconciled to those few who have omitted to visit him, if they wished to be reconciled. Yours faithfully,

GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO GORE.

SEPT. 30, 1800.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have looked into citizen Barras's valedictory address to citizen Monroe *as published here*, and find the words to be as I had supposed: "We restore in you a representative to America." In the publication you quote, the word "send" changes the signification entirely.

I wish it were possible to give a satisfactory opinion upon the Presidential election, but the probability fluctuates weekly. For some time past, Jefferson's chance *was much the best;* but within a few days we have been informed that the Federalists in South Carolina hope to prevail in the *united vote* for Adams and Pinckney. If this proves well founded, it gives Mr. Adams the only chance he could have. If, however, the new Pennsylvania Legislature can be managed by McKean and Dallas, Jefferson will still prevail. Against this, we are assured by the Pennsylvania Federalists that a majority in their Senate will immovably adhere to the district election, in which case the final issue must be considered as *now* wholly uncertain.[1] I could give you many details and conjectures on this subject, but they would not enable you to form a satisfactory judgment, and therefore I spare you the trouble of reading them. I think, however, such is the activity of parties, and they are now so distinct, that we shall soon be able to give a statement of the votes that may be expected.

Mr. Wolcott thinks Mr. Marshall accepted the secretaryship[2] from good motives, and with a view of preserving union, and that he and Dexter,[3] *by accepting*, have rendered the nation great service; for, if they had refused, we should have had — *Heaven alone knows whom!* He thinks, however, as all must, that under the present chief they will be disappointed in their hopes, and that if Jefferson is President they will probably resign.

I am alarmed at the talk of peace which is heard at your table and Mr. King's. *There can be no security, and therefore should be no peace. England may be undone by a peace while the power of France is so predominant.* There is no good, but every evil, to England to be dreaded from a peace; and certainly there is no necessity for it. Will any man pretend that England has not the means of opposing the universal empire of France now with as much effect as at the beginning of the century? I have lately been reviewing the events of that period, and cannot but be struck with the immense superiority of advantage which the British government and nation now enjoy compared with it. If Great Britain perseveres, she cannot fail of a triumph over her rival, and will

[1] The Pennsylvania Senate did hold out, and the House finally compromised for seven Federal and eight opposition electors. In South Carolina, the Federalists were beaten, the opposition obtaining all the eight votes.

[2] Of state.

[3] Appointed Secretary of War to succeed McHenry.

ultimately be reimbursed her expense as well as enjoy the glory of redeeming Europe. The power and influence which she acquires by her exertions are as solid as the gold she expends, and, if they are used wisely and without abuse, will make her as great as a nation can be, — perhaps, indeed, too great.

I concede to you that your estimate of Buonaparte's talents was the most correct. Since his return from Egypt, he has risen in my esteem by his conduct and success, though both have been favored by circumstances.

"The damned British faction" is now smaller in numbers than it has been for several years. Ames and I, with half a dozen others of your friends, still adhere with unshaken constancy to those sentiments of true patriotism (as we think) which have drawn upon us this extraordinary denunciation.

Yours faithfully, G. C.

Cabot to Gore.

Oct. 11, 1800.

My dear Friend, — I wrote to you and Mr. King each a short letter, which my son copied, and which copies are under this cover.

We are *in statu quo* as regards the election, though I think the sentiments favorable to a united vote for Adams and Pinckney have extended themselves considerably. While you and my good friend, Mr. King, lament the asperity of parties here, you will naturally recollect that your distance from the fire enables you to keep more cool than those who are in the midst of it. Jacobinism is declining in Europe, because the master of the workshop has now an interest to maintain, at least within doors, the principles, and observe the maxims of all regular establishments. Still, a little of this mischief abroad may be promoted. *Excessive* democracy, which is a sort of natural Jacobinism, threatens the United States with great trouble; and most men who reflect much and see far think we cannot avert it. Some efforts, however, will be made to consolidate and invigorate New England. An "anti-Jacobin" newspaper is, among other things, to be printed, and filled with the productions of our best men. It is at least hoped by this measure to unite, and to keep united, the Federalists, to correct their dangerous errors, and to prepare them for evils which cannot be shunned. You will not expect much from this undertaking, yet you will think it proper to be pursued. It seems to be considered

by the most sensible men, in some of the Southern and Middle States, that there is no hope for our government but what rests upon New England; and the most knowing ones think that a very slender dependence. In New York, we are told there is a total despondence; in New Jersey, the parties are balanced; but, in Pennsylvania, Jacobinism triumphs.

With all these melancholy appearances, you will not fail to remember what has often happened, — *that we derive the means of escape from evil very often from the terror it excites.*

Yours affectionately, G. C.

Cabot to Hamilton.

Brookline, Saturday, Oct. 11, 1800.

My dear Sir, — Your letter of the 2d did not reach me until last evening, it having been accidentally detained at the stage-house in this village several days.

The President is on the point of departure for the seat of government, so that no opportunity of conveyance by a private gentleman could be found. I have therefore sent your letter by a sure hand to the post-office, whence it undoubtedly goes, in the President's regular package of letters, to Quincy this day.[1] I have chosen this method as more sure of reaching his own hand than if I had sent it by a servant, who would have been obliged to deliver it, perhaps, to another servant, instead of to the President or his secretary.

[1] The letter referred to was a second, addressed by Hamilton to Adams on the charge of "a British faction," and is as follows: —

New York, Oct. 1, 1800.

Sir, — The time which has elapsed since my letter of the 1st August was delivered to you precludes the further expectation of an answer.

From this silence, I will draw no inference; nor will I presume to judge of the fitness of silence on such an occasion, on the part of the chief magistrate of a republic towards a citizen, who without a stain has discharged so many important public trusts.

But thus much I will affirm, that, by whomsoever a charge of the kind mentioned in my former letter may at any time have been made or insinuated against me, it is a base, wicked, and cruel calumny, destitute even of a plausible pretext to excuse the folly or the depravity which must have dictated it.

With due respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

Alexander Hamilton.

See Works of Hamilton, VI. 470, 471.

Our people, after all their scolding, seem now to admit more generally that Massachusetts ought fairly to vote for Adams and Pinckney; but you know that we can only give conjectures until the meeting of our Legislature. Although I am not "*an influential man*," and wish I was not thought to be, I expect at least one, and, if printed, several copies of your justificatory letter.

Dr. Dwight[1] is here stirring us up to oppose the demon of Jacobinism. A new paper, to be entitled the "New England Anti-jacobin," is to be published at Boston, and circulated as extensively as possible, especially through New England. The labors of many good men are expected in its support, and yours among the rest. Some good may reasonably be expected from it in the dissemination of useful truths, in correcting some of the dangerous errors embraced by the Federalists, in uniting and keeping them united, and in some measure preparing them for the evils they cannot shun. But the object is too vague and the means too inconstant to satisfy all our anxieties.

The President has been endeavoring to be calm and discreet, and has discovered a desire to be visited by the individuals of the "damned faction" whom he has formerly proscribed.

Yours affectionately and faithfully, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, Oct. 5, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR, — A letter from Mr. Gore, dated August 21, informs me that the Americans who daily arrive in London from Paris are generally, if not universally, of opinion that nothing will be effected by our envoys. These itinerants seem to think, too, that we are in the wrong, not because we have humbled ourselves before the "Great Nation," but because our humility is limited by the instructions which ought to have permitted the acceptance of such terms as France would prescribe.

I have already intimated to you my fears that the high and well-tempered mind of our excellent friend Ellsworth has been shaken, perhaps by sickness in part, but in part also by the events which he has witnessed, and by others which he apprehended, and all aggravated by the acts and management of a set of people at Paris

[1] Dr. Theodore Dwight, President of Yale College.

employed for the purpose, as the Kosciuskos, Barlows,[1] &c. For my own part, I rejoice exceedingly that Mr. Jay's treaty contains a bar to such conventions as the French insist on. On this point, I published yesterday in the Centinel, as "*One of the American People*," a few ideas which occurred on reading *the Paris article*;[2] and I have sent to the same press, for Wednesday's paper, some further remarks on the impudence as well as the insidiousness of all the dogmas and doctrines of the French respecting the commercial rights of neutrals, all which I consider are maintained by them with the sole view of engaging the neutrals to become pledged to support a system by which France can have *her own commerce* covered, or neutrals be brought to fight for her. You know I am too indolent to illustrate and enforce these ideas as they merit, but the hints will be useful to abler and more active men. Great pains are taken by Dr. Morse[3] and some others to effect a reconciliation, as it is called, between the President and those who disapprove his politics; but, though well meant, the attempt is absurd. We believe the President's course leads to the division, disgrace, and ruin of the Federal cause. He denounces us for entertaining these sentiments. No personal good-humor can alter the fact. I am one of the few who prefer remaining under Presidential frowns and displeasure rather than, by visiting him or any other act, indicate to the public that I have renounced opinions which are completely established, or that I can abandon men in public life whose conduct and character, I think, ought to endear them to every friend of order, virtue, and public liberty. Although I still think the engagement to support Mr. Adams with Mr. Pinckney, and which perhaps was unavoidably made, ought to be sacredly respected, yet I am strongly inclined to believe, in our *untoward* situation, we should do as well with Jefferson for President, and Mr. Pinckney Vice-President, as with any thing that we can now expect. Such an issue to the election, if fairly produced, is the only one that will keep the Federal party together, and in a state to act with renewed vigor when circumstances shall require it.

Yours faithfully and affectionately, GEORGE CABOT.

[1] Joel Barlow, of Connecticut, famous for his good Democratic principles and his bad poetry. See above, p. 240.

[2] See p. 597.

[3] Dr. Jedediah Morse, of Connecticut, better known by his geographical works and his religious labors than by politics, with which, however, he seems to have busied himself to a considerable extent.

Wolcott to Cabot.

(*Private.*)

Washington, Nov. 16, 1800.

Dear Sir,—I received your favor of October 5 a few days since, after my return from a visit to Connecticut. We know nothing more of the result of the mission to France than what appears in the papers. A treaty has unquestionably been signed, although our previous information justified a confident belief that nothing would be done. I fear there are grounds for the apprehensions you suggest; and I shall be happy if the embarrassments, which the mission to France has already occasioned, are not increased by its future consequences. Let us not however anticipate difficulties, but prepare to meet them.

After due reflection, I have considered it to be my duty to retire from office. I have accordingly written a respectful letter to the President, offering my resignation at the close of the ensuing month, to which I have received an obliging answer. I reflect with satisfaction that the business of the Treasury department has not suffered in my hands, that the revenue of the present greatly exceeds that of any former year, and that loans can be obtained, if necessary. It would be affectation to pretend that my resignation has not been attended with a conflict of emotions. I can however declare that none of them have been of a nature to produce self-crimination; and I presume to hope that my future conduct will evince a zealous attachment to the interests of my country and its government, and sincere gratitude to those who have honored me with their confidence, friendship, and support. I am, dear sir, with esteem and friendship,

Your obedient servant, O. W.

Cabot to Wolcott.

(*Private and confidential.*)

Nov. 27, 1800.

My dear Friend,—Although I had long contemplated the possible event of your retirement from office, yet my mind was not quite prepared for it when your letter of the 16th arrived. I have revolved it the greatest part of the last night, which I found impossible to pass in sleep; and I still can view the subject only as grief

or indignation presents it. A government which cannot tolerate the virtues which have been exhibited in ours cannot long enjoy the confidence of the wise and good; it cannot long be preserved pure, and will soon be thought to be not worth preserving. I know not how this event will operate upon the minds and feelings of others; but I can hardly doubt, if pride and prejudice had not made this State so blind to Mr. Adams, they would have wished to withhold their votes at this late period. In Connecticut, they are differently circumstanced and may dare to act according to the dictates of genuine public principles.

You must indulge my wishes to know your future destiny, so far at least as it is foreseen by yourself. I am anxious to learn what course you have prescribed yourself, that I may direct the prayers of my heart in conformity.

If what the newspapers represent with great appearance of truth be correct, I should think the affairs of our country are in the worst possible situation in regard to foreign nations. We nourish all the substantial differences between us and the two leading European powers, and we wantonly throw away the means which their rivalry affords us to remove those differences.

I remain ever yours, GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

Nov. 28, 1800.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Who is it possible to find for your successor in office? I have sought in vain for a character competent to its duties, and who would undertake them. Indeed, there are but few, very few, who could perform them. Mr. Steele[1] will be offended, if he is neglected; but a man ought to have more than common merits, coming from such a quarter, to secure public confidence. I will thank you, if a leisure moment recurs, to inform me, when the arrangement is made, what it is.

Writing[2] to General Hamilton, I have taken the liberty to inform him that some of his *respectable friends* censure him for displaying too much egotism and *vanity* in his book. I know how difficult it is for a man to be told of his faults without offence; but

[1] I suppose this to refer to John Steele of North Carolina, and at this time First Comptroller of the Treasury.

[2] This refers to the next letter.

I was encouraged to do what I thought a necessary service by the belief that he *cannot possibly* mistake my motive or doubt either my affection or esteem. If I have materially diminished his friendship, it will be a new spur to my cynical feelings, which already exceed those of Diogenes.

Since the success of the friends of Mr. Pinckney in our State Legislature, it has been thought by some that, if your policy had been pursued and Mr. Adams renounced absolutely by the Federalists, it would have been in our power to have carried Pinckney and Ellsworth or Jay. I am not of this opinion; but I think the issue may now be as unfavorable to the permanent interest of the Federal cause as it would have been in any issue of the other course. But the truth is local causes support Mr. Adams here too strongly; and in the Middle States, where he ought to have been first openly opposed, the Federalists were too weak for the operation. In Pennsylvania, nothing would have been hazarded, because all was previously lost; but in Delaware, and especially in Jersey, the attempt, by dividing the Federalists, would have defeated them altogether. I do not therefore see how the thing could have been well managed very differently. Your resignation gives great pain to the few persons whom I have made acquainted with it, and will doubtless excite general uneasiness among the sober people and those who have much property.

Accept my unfeigned regards. G. CABOT.

I have sent a copy of Judge Washington's paragraph to Rhode Island, and shall put the letter you sent into the hands of our electors.

CABOT TO HAMILTON.

BROOKLINE, Nov. 29, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR, — It is too late to use the letter you enclosed me in Vermont, and here it is unnecessary.

I am satisfied the votes in this State and New Hampshire will be all for Adams and Pinckney. You will have seen with some pleasure that our Legislature have conducted in the manner which was predicted by our friend, Mr. Lowell, Jr.[1] To his efforts, indeed, much of the success may be attributed.

[1] John Lowell, Jr., son of Judge Lowell mentioned above, p. 175. He was distinguished as a lawyer, and was one of the ablest of the political writers of his day. He was Mr. Cabot's nephew, and a warm personal friend as well.

Some fears are entertained lest the electors in Rhode Island, though decidedly Federal, will not all vote for Pinckney. To avoid such a misfortune, Ames has written earnest expostulations, which will be communicated to the electors, or some of the influential ones; and Mr. Mason,[1] who will be at Providence on Monday, carries with him a copy of a letter just received by me from Mr. Wolcott, containing a paragraph from Judge Washington, extremely well calculated to induce a fair and equal vote for Pinckney in New England.

Admitting that your friends are "dismayed" by your letter concerning Mr. Adams, it is nevertheless possible you may be right in publishing it. I am of opinion that no publication of the kind would have been well received at this time in any part of the United States; and this opinion is manifestly supported by the fact: —

> "Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land,
> All fear, none aid you, and few understand."

So said the man who had more good sense than commonly falls to the lot of a poet.[2]

I don't think the case exactly parallel, yet I cannot omit to remind you of "Burke's Reflections," which were reprobated almost universally when they first appeared. Even those who approved the sentiments thought the avowal of them imprudent and the publication of them untimely.

I wish some one who is more in the world than I am, and who feels, if possible, *as much interest* in every thing that affects you as I feel, would furnish you with correct information of all the opinions which are expressed by sensible men, and especially by your friends.

While I cannot conceal that some of these would be unpleasant to hear, I am persuaded that most of them are explicable, on the principles of human nature, and do not in the smallest degree inculpate the writer. Men are easily made angry with the messenger of ill news, and they who love their ease listen with great impatience to those who tell them they must no longer indulge it. Some who felt great dislike to Mr. Adams are disappointed that you have treated him with so much moderation. They opened your book with the expectation of seeing Mr. Adams convicted of designs to

[1] Jonathan Mason, of Boston, senator from Massachusetts 1800–3, and afterwards member of Congress from 1817–20.

[2] Pope, Essay on Man.

involve the country in war with Great Britain, that he might thus secure to himself the support of those numerous but mistaken people, whose animosity to Britain is ardent and inveterate; they expected you would describe in just but glowing colors his pernicious jealousy of Washington's superior merits and fame, and the intolerance of such a spirit toward all men who enjoy a great degree of public confidence; they expected you would have analyzed him so effectually as to prove that he is, and must be, but little attached to the support of public credit and the rights of property, and that his ideas respecting commerce, and the use it may be put to in our foreign politics, are more unsound than even Jefferson's or Madison's: in a word, that war with England, privateering, and paper money, with all their baneful appendages and consequences, are viewed by him, not as evils to be deprecated, but resources to be preferred to that stable condition aimed at by the Washington system, which he hates, and which he has been constrained by circumstances to support.

Yet the men who looked for all this acknowledge it would have been highly impolitic and injudicious, if you had executed it.

There are others, but they are not numerous, who think you have done too much already in the crimination of Mr. Adams.

All agree that the execution is masterly, but I am *bound* to tell you that you are accused by respectable men of egotism; and some very worthy and sensible men say you have exhibited the same *vanity* in your book which you charge as a dangerous quality and great weakness in Mr. Adams.

I should have left it to your enemies to tell you of the censures of your friends, if I was not persuaded that you cannot possibly mistake my motives or doubt of the sincerity of my affection or the greatness of my esteem.

Yours faithfully, GEORGE CABOT.

CHAPTER IX.

1801-1806.

Private Life. — Society. — Business. — Occupations. — Political Matters. — Correspondence.

AFTER the downfall of his party, Mr. Cabot withdrew more completely even than before from the field of politics. At no time was he a good correspondent; but, after the beginning of the century, his indolent habits in this respect became more confirmed, and his letters steadily diminished in number. The realization of his melancholy forebodings as to the political fate of the country, and the disgust excited by the internal dissensions and consequent ruin of the Federalist party, were the principal causes of the increase in Mr. Cabot's innate aversion to publicity and to public affairs. Other events, too, of a more private character contributed, as years went on, to the same result.

His life at this time, though quiet and secluded, was both a contented and happy one. Although fond of the country, he did not enjoy the drudgery of farming, and relieved himself of it by a judicious lease of his estate to a tenant. His household was a small one, and its affairs were regulated with a wise simplicity and necessary economy. He still held the office of President of the Boston Branch of the United States Bank, and this necessitated occasional visits to Boston; but, except in this way, he saw little of society. His old party friends from other States were sometimes in Boston, and then he had the pleasure of entertaining them at his house. Now and again, one would come to Brookline for several days; but the only person whom Mr. Cabot saw regularly or frequently was Fisher Ames, with whom he constantly

interchanged visits, and whose society was always one of his chiefest and most valued pleasures. But Mr. Cabot's principal resources were found in his library. Books were to him unfailing and ever welcome friends, and from them he derived at this time his greatest satisfaction. A life of such perfect retirement and leisure suited well with his disposition. His natural indolence, his disinclination to mix much with other men, his dislike of the jarrings of the outer world, his studious tastes and reflective temperament were all gratified by a condition which he himself terms that of "a complete recluse." But man lives not to himself alone, and domestic duties required a change in his mode of life, which put an end to this secluded and peaceful existence. In these days of rapid transit, the distance of five miles from a large city seems trifling in the extreme, and it is difficult to conceive that at the beginning of the century residence in Brookline not only meant entire seclusion, but also involved separation from those members of the family who were compelled to live in Boston. Mr. Cabot's eldest son, Charles, had, like his father, entered upon the career of a sea captain and merchant; and long voyages to the East Indies permitted but rare and distant visits to his home. This separation from their eldest son caused Mr. and Mrs. Cabot to cling even more closely to their other children. Henry, the second, and Edward, the third son, were respectively at this time in a law office and counting-house in Boston; and so long as their father remained in Brookline, therefore, they were unable to be with him except on Sunday. To this almost constant separation Mr. Cabot was most unwilling to submit; and he did not, moreover, think it right that his only daughter, then just entering upon womanhood, should for six months in the year be entirely cut off from all society. From these motives, though with great reluctance, he sold his farm in Brookline, and early in the year 1803 removed to Boston, where he passed the rest of his life. At this time, also,

the firm of Lee & Cabot, formed in the early days at Beverly, but which had long since ceased to carry on any active business, was finally dissolved. The year of his removal to Boston closed sadly for Mr. Cabot, darkened by sorrow for the death of his youngest son, Edward; and, before six months more had elapsed, he was called upon to bear a large private share in the profound public grief excited by the tragic and untimely death of Hamilton. Not only did this event cause the keenest sorrow to Mr. Cabot as the loss of an intimate and valued personal friend to whom he was warmly attached, but it removed the last hope which he had ventured to cherish for his party and its future success. Under the guidance of Hamilton, in changed circumstances and as the advocates of a new policy, the Federalists might have again succeeded to power, or at least might have remained a powerful and dreaded opposition. But the loss of their great leader was irreparable, and no one was left in the smallest degree capable of wisely directing the party, and at the same time maintaining a strong ascendancy over its members. Hamilton, at his death, left his family in very straitened circumstances; and Mr. Cabot devoted himself at once to relieve them and ameliorate their condition. Several years before, Colonel Pickering, on his dismissal from office, had resolved to go again into the wilderness, and support himself and his family by cultivating the lands which he there possessed. This scheme alarmed his friends; and, as Colonel Pickering would receive no direct assistance, they raised sufficient money to buy his wild lands at a generous price, and thus enabled him to live in Massachusetts, and to enter once more into public life. Mr. Cabot was a large subscriber to the fund for the purchase of Colonel Pickering's land, and was one of those most interested and most active in the whole affair. He and his associates, however, were none of them men who could do any thing with the territory they had bought, and indeed it seems never to have occurred to them that the land

was any thing more than an excuse to assure a competency to Colonel Pickering. That they regarded their purchase solely as a gift, as a means of retaining their friend amongst them, and as a tribute which that friend eminently deserved, is evident from the fashion in which the subscribers neglected their newly acquired property. No attempt was made to improve, set off, or sell the lands; nor were the final deeds even passed between the associates and Colonel Pickering.[1] But now the death of Hamilton, and the pressing needs of his family, suggested a use to which this extensive property might be applied. The ensuing correspondence[2] explains itself, and the kindness to which it bears witness, connected as it is with a previous act of like generosity, reflects credit and honor upon all concerned, while at the same time it illustrates the fidelity and practical value of undemonstrative New England friendship.

[*Subscription for the Benefit of General Hamilton's Family.*]

Having in remembrance the exalted worth and pre-eminent services of the late General Hamilton, — his extraordinary and truly patriotic exertions, which contributed so much to save our country from the greatest impending calamities; his able, disinterested, and successful efforts to inculcate the wisdom, justice, and advantage of all those maxims of jurisprudence which render sacred the rights of property and which are inseparable from true liberty, and especially recollecting that the devotion of his time and talents to these public interests has operated to deprive his family of a common share of those pecuniary advantages which his labors, if applied to them, would have easily made abundant: we, there-

[1] Life of Pickering, IV. 28, 35–41.

[2] These documents have already been partially printed in Mr. Upham's Life of Pickering; but from Mr. Cabot's connection with the affair, as well as from the nature of the transaction and the light it throws on the sincere attachment felt by the leading Federalists for Hamilton, I have no hesitation in giving them again, and without abbreviation.

fore, whose names are subscribed, to testify in some degree our sense of departed excellence, and our gratitude for benefits conferred on our country, do engage that we will pay into the hands of the Honorable George Cabot, Thomas Davis, and Theodore Lyman, Esqs., the sums of money set against our respective names, to be by them applied to the benefit of the children or family of General Hamilton in any manner they shall judge proper.

And whereas we whose names follow are proprietors of certain parcels of land in Pennsylvania, which we purchased in 1801 of Timothy Pickering, Esq., in shares of $100 each, which lands are not yet divided or formally conveyed, we do hereby authorize and request the said Timothy Pickering, Esq., to convey by a quit-claim deed to such person or persons as shall be named to him for that purpose, by the afore-mentioned George Cabot, Thomas Davis, and Theodore Lyman, Esqs., or any two of them, so many of our shares in said lands as we have set against our respective names.[1]

Some time after this scheme had been set on foot, Mr. King arrived from New York, and, anxious to engage the New England Federalists in the plan adopted by the New York friends of Hamilton, addressed the following letter to Mr. Cabot: —

KING TO CABOT.

WALTHAM, Oct. 10, 1804.

DEAR SIR, — According to a schedule of General Hamilton's estate, drawn up by himself a few days before his death, it appears that his property consists altogether of new lands situate in the western part of New York, and of a house nine miles from the city. The new lands cost fifty-five thousand dollars, and the country house and grounds about twenty-five thousand. The General's debts amount to fifty-five thousand dollars; and, as the estate is unproductive and the debts bear an interest, it is the opinion of judicious persons that, with the most prudent management, the estate will be but barely sufficient to pay the debts. Mrs. Hamilton is a daughter of General Schuyler, who has a family of eight or nine children. The General is supposed to have a good real

[1] Then follows a list of all the subscribers, with one exception, to the Pickering fund for the amounts severally subscribed in 1801. This list is given in the Life of Pickering, IV. 28.

estate, but not much personal property; so that little expectation can be entertained of any considerable amount from this quarter, either for the maintenance of General Hamilton's family, or for the education and advancement of his children. To the sorrow that every virtuous mind has felt for the death of this distinguished patriot, it is painful to add the reflection that his young and helpless family must depend for their support, not upon the earnings of their father, for he served the public, but upon the contributions of a few individuals who admired his unequalled worth. The subscription for this purpose at New York amounted to upwards of nineteen thousand dollars when I last heard from thence (which was before my journey to the eastward), and it was expected that a considerable addition would be made to this sum.

With the most affectionate regard, I am, dear sir,

Your faithful and obedient servant, RUFUS KING.

TRUSTEES' LETTER TO COLONEL PICKERING.

BOSTON, Nov. 16, 1804.

SIR, — The design which was formed to transfer to the heirs of General Hamilton the lands purchased of you in 1801 is now accomplished, so far as depended on the acts of those purchasers. By the enclosed papers, it will appear that the actual conveyance of the land, either to the executors of General Hamilton's will, or to any other persons, as well as the time and manner of making such conveyance, remains to be definitively regulated and arranged by and between those gentlemen and you. Whenever this is completed, we shall cancel and deliver to you the written covenants you entered into, which are now in our possession.

It is understood that you have paid for taxes, surveying, &c., one or two hundred dollars, which ought to be reimbursed without delay. We wish, therefore, you would be so good as to inform us of the amount, that we may immediately provide for its discharge.

With the highest respect and esteem, we are, dear sir,

Your assured friends and servants,

GEO. CABOT.
THOS. DAVIS.
THEO. LYMAN.

TRUSTEES TO EXECUTORS OF HAMILTON'S WILL.

BOSTON, Nov. 26, 1804.

GENTLEMEN, — We enclose you a copy of an original paper which is committed to us by the gentlemen whose signatures it bears. Its objects as well as motives are sufficiently explained; but in relation to what yet remains to be done, to fulfil the precise intentions of the subscribers, it may be proper to observe: 1st, that the purchasers of the Pennsylvania lands having in view the accommodation of Colonel Pickering more than any pecuniary advantage to themselves, it is to be considered as a condition of the present transfer, that his interest and convenience should be consulted in the future disposal of the property no less than that of the new proprietors; 2d, Colonel Pickering retained for himself eighty-eight shares, which is something more than a fourth part of the whole property, and it was expected he would superintend it altogether; accordingly he alone has paid to it the attention it has received, and for this care he would at some subsequent period have been compensated, by a commission on the sales or some other equivalent emolument; and, lastly, it may be remarked that the conveyance of the lands by Colonel Pickering is to be in deeds of quitclaim only, and not with warranties. This provision has not proceeded from any distrust of the titles by which Colonel Pickering holds, but from the original determination of the subscribers to liberate an estimable friend from all responsibility for title, if from any cause it should in whole or in part be ever found defective. These observations we have deemed essential to a just understanding of the views of those whom we have the honor to represent; but, for whatever may assist you in judging of the value of the property or its proper management in future, we must refer you to Colonel Pickering, who we are assured will readily impart to you all the information he possesses. As we are intrusted with the nomination of the persons to whom the property shall be conveyed, we cannot hesitate to name the executors of General Hamilton's will, leaving it with them to name others, if they think it expedient, and also to arrange with Colonel Pickering the time and circumstances of making the conveyance.

Every occurrence that forces the mind back to the epoch of General Hamilton's death revives the most poignant sorrow. The deep-felt grief of wise and good men everywhere testifies their

sense of an irreparable loss to the public, while the strong sympathies which are awakened for those who were by nature attached to him are a just tribute to his private virtues. If it were possible to express our own regrets, they would show how dear he was to us. We are, gentlemen, with the greatest respect,

Your most humble servants,

GEORGE CABOT.
THOS. DAVIS.
THEO. LYMAN.

JOHN B. CHURCH, NICHOLAS FISH, NATHANIEL PENDLETON, Esqs., Executors of the last will and testament of Alexander Hamilton (deceased).

EXECUTORS TO TRUSTEES.

NEW YORK, Nov. 29, 1804.

GENTLEMEN,— We received the letter you did us the honor to write, of the 26th inst., with a copy of a deed authorizing a conveyance of certain valuable lands to trustees, for the benefit of the heirs of General Hamilton, and a copy of a letter from you to Colonel Pickering, as to the manner of effecting it.

This act of munificence towards the family of a man so dear to his country and his friends, from persons of such well-known worth as those whom you represent, will be regarded as a testimony equally strong and honorable of his merit; and their liberality and the manner of it are no less delicate than the motives are noble and disinterested.

We receive with the greatest respect the honor you have done us personally, by naming us the trustees of your benefaction. Having been long and closely united with General Hamilton by the ties of an intimate friendship, and feeling it to be no less our duty than our wish to render to his family any services that may be in our power, we cannot decline any trouble a trust created for so interesting a purpose may give us. We therefore accept it, and we hope we need not add our assurance that it shall be performed with fidelity.

We take the liberty to suggest that in any deed that may be executed by Colonel Pickering, for the lands in question, pursuant to your directions, our wish is that the precise objects of the trust may be designated, and that the powers intended to be given to the trustees for the disposition or improvement of the fund may be as definite as the nature of the subject will permit.

We have the honor to be, gentlemen, with esteem and consideration, your obedient, humble servants,

J. B. CHURCH.
NICHOLAS FISH.
NATHANIEL PENDLETON.

HON. GEORGE CABOT, THOMAS DAVIS, THEODORE LYMAN.

TRUSTEES TO EXECUTORS.

BOSTON, 1st January, 1805.

GENTLEMEN, — We were honored with your letter of 29th November, which we ought to have acknowledged before this late day.

The gentlemen whom we represent desire that their contributions may be as subservient as possible to the use and convenience of General Hamilton's children and family. With a view to this, it was proposed to convey the property to the trustees, free from all conditions which might embarrass its disposal or the application of its proceeds, if it should be sold. But, if a more definite appropriation is thought necessary, we request that the conveyance may be to John B. Church, Nicholas Fish, and Nathaniel Pendleton, the survivors or survivor of them, and the heirs of the survivor, upon this special trust and confidence: to sell the same or any part thereof, and to apply the proceeds thereof to the use of the children of General Hamilton, at the discretion of the said trustees, the survivors or survivor of them, and the heirs of the survivor; but, until such sale shall be so made, the lands to be holden for the use of General Hamilton's children as joint-tenants in fee-simple, provided that Colonel Pickering may sell and dispose of the same lands, or any part thereof, at the direction and request of the said trustees, the survivors or survivor of them, or the heirs of the survivor, instead of the conveyance first aforesaid, and pay over the proceeds of such sale, by him so made, to the said trustees, the survivors or survivor of them, or the heirs of the survivor, &c., to be received upon the same trusts as the moneys which may be received by the said trustees upon sales by them made, if any are above directed.

If this form of words should be thought either inconvenient or inadequate, we shall be ready to adopt any other more eligible, which you shall have the goodness to recommend. And we take

the liberty of suggesting to you the expediency of seeing Colonel Pickering as he passes through your city, on his return from Washington, that the business may be definitively arranged as far as is practicable.

We are, gentlemen, with the highest respect, your most obedient servants,

G. CABOT.
T. DAVIS.
T. LYMAN.

To JOHN B. CHURCH, NICHOLAS FISH, NATHANIEL PENDLETON, Esq., New York.

The tranquillity of Mr. Cabot's life was but little disturbed by political events during the years covered by the letters in this chapter; and his participation in affairs of public interest was, with scarcely an exception, limited to the letters and conversations on political topics, in which every reflecting man was at that period wont to indulge. The utter defeat of the Federalists, although anticipated, still caused deep regret to Mr. Cabot, because it appeared to preclude the possibility of the strong constitutional government he had hoped to see established. Yet he regarded this change as the inevitable result of natural causes, at which it was useless to repine. He had no sympathy with the intrigues by which his party in Washington sought to gratify their hatred of Jefferson, by the elevation of Burr;[1]

[1] Mr. Randall says in his Life of Jefferson (II. 583), "Cabot had previously written to Hamilton, favoring the idea of preferring Burr." This assertion Mr. Randall supports by reference to a letter from Hamilton to Wolcott (Hamilton's Works, VI. 487). The first paragraph of the letter referred to reads as follows: "Your last letter, my dear sir, has given me great pain; not only because it informed me that the opinion in favor of Mr. Burr was increasing among the Federalists, but because it also told me that Mr. ——— was one of its partisans. I have a letter from this gentleman, in which he expresses decidedly his preference for Mr. Jefferson" The rest of the letter from which this is quoted refers solely to Burr's character. I made an application to the state department in Washington for a copy of this letter, that I might determine whether Mr. Cabot's name was the one which filled the blank in the printed form. A copy of the letter was refused me, without any reason being stated; but Mr. Hunter, the second assistant

but at the same time Mr. Cabot, like most of his political associates, seriously misunderstood Jefferson's character, and attributed to him a reckless determination to carry out in practice all that he believed as theory. In one of his letters, indeed, he speaks of Mr. Jefferson as conservative in temperament, but this is evidently an expression caused by deference to the opinion of others; for the profound distrust and dislike with which he really regarded the new President are very apparent throughout his correspondence. Mr. Cabot, however, found some ground for consolation and hope in the appointment of Mr. Madison and Mr. Gallatin, whom he considered reasonable, intelligent, and conservative men, according to their kind, and opposed to the most visionary and mischievous theories of their chief. In regard to the future course of his own party, Mr. Cabot's views were at first quite different from those adopted and acted upon by the official leaders. Believing that the principles of pure democracy had completely triumphed, he thought that the utmost now to be expected was to modify and soften the effects of those principles, and he perceived but one way in which this could be brought about: as he constantly says in his letters, "Things must grow worse before they are better." He felt that the Democratic doctrines were sure to be speedily pushed to dangerous extremes, that by the inevitable reaction which would then ensue divisions would arise among the Jacobins, that a conservative force would be generated

Secretary of State, in conveying this refusal, said, — "You may, however, be informed that the name of George Cabot is not the one that, in the copy of Hamilton's letter here, fills the blank in the printed copy." It therefore appears that Mr. Randall filled this blank by conjecture, and then founded on it an accusation against Mr. Cabot. Nor was this all: in the same volume of Hamilton's Works (p. 454) is a letter from Mr. Cabot (given above, p. 284), in which he speaks of the opinions of some Federalists favorable to Burr, but adds that he is not a man who can be trusted. Mr. Randall has therefore not only made his accusation on the authority of a letter in which Mr. Cabot's name was not even mentioned, but he did this in the face of Mr. Cabot's own adverse opinion printed in the same volume.

in their ranks, and that the moderate men would part company with the violent partisans. To unite at the moment of this division with the more conservative among their present opponents seemed to Mr. Cabot to offer to the Federalists the only possible chance for future success. But, in order to take such an advantage of the enemies' dissensions, he felt that the Federalists ought to concentrate and consolidate their forces, and prevent at all hazards any further feuds within the party; that they ought to refrain from unmeasured attacks, and above all that they ought to beware of cultivating deep and bitter animosities with the men who might one day be their allies. It is easy now to point out the wrong premise on which this reasoning was based. Jefferson was the last man to run into any thing so unpopular as the vices of the French proletariat. But though Mr. Cabot misjudged Jefferson, in supposing him bold and reckless, and capable of precipitating a ruinous division in his party, yet a split was sure to come sooner or later; and there can be little doubt that such a division between the moderate and extreme Democrats was the only way in which the Federalists could obtain the very limited measure of success henceforth possible to them. They could never have returned to the power they held in the days of Washington and Adams; but they might have shared the administration with conservative Democrats, and modified the evils which Jefferson, now leading and now pushed by his extreme partisans, brought upon the country. In any event, however, the firm, temperate, and dignified policy which, after their defeat, Mr. Cabot wished his party to adopt, would have been by far the best and wisest. Unfortunately, the actual leaders thought differently; and, in the miserable years which followed Jefferson's first term, any thing resembling moderation was flung away by both sides, and by all public men. The result was a series of blunders, failures, egregious mistakes, and savage quarrels, which can be palliated only by the extreme and perhaps insurmountable difficulties

of the political situation. It was the only period of our history when we filled the perhaps useful, but certainly disagreeable position of foot-ball for the two great nations of Europe. As a consequence of our humiliating situation, and of the difficulties incident to an honorable or even possible extrication, the policy of individuals and of parties presents but little for proud contemplation. No matter what our political sympathies may be, the first fifteen years of this century offer nothing of a political nature that is not in some degree mortifying and painful.

The removals from office for political reasons, and the Democratic attacks on the judiciary, during Jefferson's first term, greatly alarmed Mr. Cabot, and met with his severest reprobation. He sympathized also with his party in their oppposition to the acquisition of Louisiana, a measure which he considered unconstitutional, as well as politically dangerous. But, much as he feared and disliked the policy of Jefferson's administration, he was by no means prepared to take part in the scheme for a separation of the Union, which was urged upon him by his friend, Colonel Pickering. In reply to the latter's letter on this subject, he took the ground that the plan was not only impracticable and unwise, but that, if carried out, it would not accomplish the desired results. In a letter to Mr. King, Mr. Cabot, commenting upon Colonel Pickering's suggestions, says that he is strongly of opinion that the proposed separation is not justified by the political mismanagement of the dominant party. He believed that the Union was of too great value to be endangered, merely on account of a bad and perhaps temporary policy. In these opinions as to a separation of the States, Mr. Cabot was in full accord with Hamilton, King, and most of the other leading Federalists, whose quiet opposition sufficed to extinguish completely this plan, which had emanated entirely from those members of the party who were at that time senators or members of Congress. The close of the year 1805 was marked by the

only occasion on which Mr. Cabot took any active part in public matters. This happened in connection with the first symptoms of the coming troubles with England. Under the modification of the rule of 1756, as recognized hitherto by the British orders in council, neutrals might trade to and from the colonies of belligerents, and also to and from the mother countries, but not between the two. By a slight extension of the voyage, therefore, the rule could be evaded, and the produce of the colonies of belligerents be carried to their respective mother countries. The Americans, quick to perceive their opportunity, soon made a practice of loading their vessels with colonial produce, touching at some American port, and then sailing at once for Europe. While the desperate struggle in which England and France were engaged lasted, the result of this proceeding on the part of our merchants was that nearly all the great carrying trade fell into American hands. The English, indignant both at the immunity enjoyed by French commerce thus carried on by neutrals, and at the loss of their own, seized some of the American vessels engaged in this trade; and the British admiralty courts adjudged them good prize, on the ground that the neutral flag was in many, if not in most cases, a mere fraud to protect belligerent property. The news of these seizures, or rather of the consequent decisions, aroused the anger of all Americans, but especially of those inhabiting the seaport towns. In all the great commercial centres, indignation meetings were held, and bulky memorials drafted and sent to Congress. One of these was a meeting of the merchants of Boston, to remonstrate to Congress against the British doctrines. A committee, of whom Mr. Cabot was one, was appointed; and they reported a memorial drawn by Mr. Lloyd,[1] which was adopted and forwarded to Washington.[2] Mr. Cabot felt himself constrained to accept a place on

[1] James Lloyd, afterwards senator from Massachusetts.

[2] For this memorial, see Annals of Congress, 1806–7, p. 890; New England Palladium for Jan. 31, 1806; or Waite's State Papers, V. 367.

this committee, as one of Boston's leading merchants; but, while he was not convinced that the decisions of the courts were incorrect, he also feared that the excitement attendant on all popular movements might result in measures and demonstrations which he himself could not but deem extreme and mischievous. Thus it was that he consented with the greatest reluctance to take a leading part in the meeting; for he was especiallly averse to the barest appearance of professing opinions which he did not really hold, or of acceding, from deference to the popular wish, to measures which he had always conscientiously opposed. Fisher Ames, writing at this time to Colonel Pickering, says: —

"I have just returned from Boston, where I find the merchants have had a meeting on Mr. Fitzsimmons's letter, and appointed a committee of seven. Our friend Cabot is much, too much, mortified that he is one of them. He hates hypocrisy, and respects principles; and he dreads lest the popular feeling should impel the committee to deny what he believes to be true, or to ask for what he knows to be mischievous. I confess I have rather approved the meetings of merchants. . . . I expect more good than evil from their interposition, especially if such men as Cabot will consent to appear among them. I hope they will be prevailed on soon or late to depute such men as James Lloyd and Thomas H. Perkins to the government, as their committee, who could not fail to impose respect on the Sam. Smiths [1] among you." [2]

Colonel Pickering, in a letter to Mr. Lowell many years later, says: —

"Much against his will, and contrary to his own better judgment, he [Mr. Cabot] was placed at the head of the committee which, in 1806, subscribed and sent to Washington the remonstrances drawn by Lloyd against the British doctrine concerning neutral trade. He signed it (he afterwards told me), *officially*, as one of the merchants' (or town's) committee." [3]

These admiralty decisions were but the beginning of the end. The peace and prosperity of Jefferson's first term,

[1] Mr. Smith was a senator from Maryland, and brother of Robert Smith, Secretary of the Navy.

[2] Works of Ames, I. 342.

[3] See p. 542.

engendered by the twelve previous years of wise and strong administrations, now came rudely to a close; and our government embarked on that crazy policy which, after years of contumely abroad and factious opposition at home, resulted in the unnecessary and fruitless war of 1812. To Jefferson's embargo policy, the first step on the downward path, Mr. Cabot was, of course, most deeply opposed. On this subject, his wide commercial experience gave him peculiar fitness to judge; and he had always been a consistent enemy to embargoes, and indeed to any doctrine which favored much interference with trade. In 1794, he opposed and voted against such a measure when introduced in the Senate; and a few years later, in writing to his friends, at the time of the French difficulties, he expressed his strong objections to an embargo, except when laid under the strictest limitations and in compliance with the severest necessity. In the present instance, he regarded Jefferson's restrictive policy with all his old hostility to such measures; and his convictions were still more strengthened by the circumstances of the time, which rendered an embargo of peculiar danger. Mr. Cabot, like most of the Federalists, believed that Jefferson, for selfish ends and to promote the interests of France, sought to drive the United States into a war with Great Britain. Whether this view of the President's motives was right or wrong, the fact that an English war was imminent could not escape the attention of any reflecting man. An embargo, therefore, was not only a mistake, but a piece of criminal folly; for, while it drew down war with one hand, it destroyed with the other our best and indeed our only means of fighting. It ran directly counter to the most cherished doctrine of the Federalists, the preservation of a strong neutrality; and, what was far worse, it also was in direct opposition to all the dictates of common prudence and common sense. We were actually on the verge of a conflict with the greatest maritime power in the world; and yet, not content with this and

with the prior destruction of our navy, the Jeffersonian policy seemed to aim at nothing less than the annihilation of our mercantile marine, from which alone it was possible to obtain seamen to navigate our public ships and fight our national battles. Mr. Cabot, on this ground alone, very rightly believed that the embargo was the most fatal measure that could be taken. But he also opposed the whole policy on economic principles, which are set forth at length in his letters. I shall attempt, therefore, no summary of his opinions on these questions, but leave him to speak for himself through the medium of his correspondence.

Cabot to Gore.

April 10, 1801.

My dear Friend, — I received last evening your letter of the 20th of February, containing important information of affairs on your side the water and some valuable speculation upon their tendencies. I shall inquire of persons learned in the law; and, if I find that our bankrupt act will relieve insolvent epistolary debtors, I shall avail myself of its provisions. If otherwise, I shall make the best composition I can with my creditors; and, as you and Mr. King are the principal ones, I hope and entreat you to be liberal. You will naturally consider that idle men find no time to do any thing. This truth, hidden from vulgar eyes, will be the first before yours and his.

Although I do not rate very highly the talents of an English cabinet for diplomatic management, and although I have always thought they studied the prejudices and accommodated themselves to the humors of others less than their interest required, yet I do not think they could by any course of conduct have prevented the hostile disposition of the continental nations as it now appears; in some the effect of folly, in others of rivalry, and some of terror. I am glad you think England, if quiet and orderly at home, will succeed against the confederacy. Heaven alone foresees the issue; but, judging by such lights as I enjoy, I should say there is a moral certainty that England will triumph *over all her external enemies*, if

her own subjects are true and loyal, as their interest plainly requires, as well as their duty, that they should be.

I have good reason to believe that our new President is determined to keep clear of the war. Happy will it be for our country, if he can maintain this determination against his own pre-existing prejudices and the incessant assaults of his party.

The "Gazette of the United States" and the "Palladium" will show you what the good men think on this subject, especially the "Palladium."

While Mr. Jefferson pronounces our government the strongest in the world, some others of our wise men affirm its best days are past; and I believe the sentiment is extensive, that we are doomed to suffer all the evils of an *excessive* democracy through the United States. Our elections grow worse, and the Maratists and Robespierrians everywhere raise their heads. What should you have thought two or three years ago if you had been told that a very large and powerful party was formed in Connecticut, who have deliberated and probably decided to elect Pierrepont Edwards,[1] instead of Trumbull,[2] their governor? You may believe this now. Probably they will not succeed in their first essay; but, if they should, this fact, in addition to others of a similar nature which are already recorded in our annals, must put an end to all argument among sensible and fair men on the practicability of honest popular governments. Having been always in heart, soul, and mind, attached to the principles of our governments, and enthusiastic in my desires and hopes that we should support them and be blessed by them, I have been for some years suffering the pain of disappointment at their successive failures which experiment has produced. There is no security for a good government without some popular mixture in it; but there will be neither justice nor stability in any system,

[1] Pierrepont Edwards, son of Jonathan Edwards. Though an advocate for the adoption of the Constitution, he became a prominent Democratic leader, and was the principal founder of the so-called "Toleration" party in Connecticut. Hildreth says he was "the maternal uncle of Burr, whom he resembled as well in accomplishments and address as in profligacy of private character, at least in whatever related to women." History of the United States, V. 531, 533.

[2] Jonathan Trumbull the younger son of the celebrated Revolutionary governor. Like his father, he held for many years a leading position in Connecticut politics, and was governor of the State, from 1798–1809 the year of his death.

if some material parts of it are not independent of popular control. Authority, as well as sentiment and interest, must combine to make a government a blessing to any people.

Yours truly, G. C.

Wolcott to Cabot.

Litchfield, July 27, 1801.

My dear Sir, — After a long silence, during which I have been neither inactive nor forgetful of my friends, I think it right to inform you where I am, and how circumstanced, and to propose a renewal of our correspondence. I am at length planted on my native hill, in a pleasant little town where there are several agreeable families and some of the leading Democrats of Connecticut. Kirby, our new supervisor, is my near neighbor. We of course experience good and evil; friendship, envy, and slander, — in short, most of the pleasures and plagues incident to a village life.

It was my expectation to have visited Boston this summer, in company with Mrs. Wolcott. This pleasure must be postponed to the next season, in consequence of her late indisposition, and the necessity I am under of superintending some repairs to render our situation convenient during the ensuing winter.

I have written this detail of my domestic situation, to furnish an excuse for requesting information respecting yours. The best substitute for the pleasure of yours and Mrs. Cabot's society will be such a description as you can give of your situation, sentiments, and feelings.

Mr. Jefferson, contrary to my hopes, and in some degree to my expectation, appears to have commenced a vindictive attack upon the Federalists of New England; and, if I understand his intention, he is determined to distinguish his administration by subverting the systems and destroying the characters of those who supported or aided his predecessors. The attempt, if made, will not succeed. The best mode of repelling this assault, however, ought to be well considered. Will you be so good as to inform me what impression the President's conduct has made on the minds of the *common people*, on Mr. Adams and his friends, and whether the gentlemen of information have adopted any system of defence? In short, I wish to know briefly the political situation of Massachusetts. It is highly probable that we have a serious task to perform. We ought

not to hasten the crisis; but, when it arrives, I hope we shall be prepared to act in concert and with effect.

I remain as ever your assured friend and obedient servant,

O. W.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, Aug. 3, 1801.

MY DEAR SIR, — I was much gratified with your letter of the 27th July, which, having been sent to Brook*field* by mistake of the postmaster, did not reach me until yesterday morning. While I feel the strongest solicitude that your circumstances should be in all respects propitious to happiness, I pray chiefly that it may not be dependent on them. Every village, as well as every city, which contains men, will have democrats and demagogues, the latter of whom must live by practising upon the weaknesses and administering to the vices of the former. While you have about you some whose society you can enjoy, there will be others whose interest and whose pleasure it must be to mar your enjoyment.

I am not able to inform you of the impression which is made upon our common people by Mr. Jefferson's revolutionary movements, nor do I know with any certainty how they are treated by Mr. Adams. I live out of the world, and have but little communication with it, and that little through the medium of *our own sect* exclusively. If instead of a fact I might offer an opinion, it would be that our common people are not yet sensibly affected by any thing done or threatened by Mr. Jefferson.

I should think, however, Mr. Adams must feel great indignation: first, because his own principles and conduct are impudently condemned; and, second, because I learn that those Federalists who adhered to his (Mr. Adams's) greatest errors are full of resentment against Mr. Jefferson.

I can speak of that class of men which I more particularly esteem, and whose politics I deem correct, with less doubt. They are *surprised at the weakness*, and provoked extremely at the pernicious principles avowed by Mr. Jefferson in his answer to the New Haven remonstrants.[1] It is, however, a general opinion

[1] President Adams had appointed Elizur Goodrich, a member of Congress, to the collectorship of New Haven. Goodrich was in every way a competent man and good officer, but his appointment had been made after Jefferson's election was known. All nominations of this sort, Jefferson, who was

among these men that no *system* of defence can yet be adopted, although it is difficult to refrain from making the most censorious observations themselves, and impossible to prevent them from being made by others, and inculcated in the newspapers; yet it is a common sentiment that considerable time must elapse, and much be borne and suffered, before the pressure of existing evils and the apprehension of others and greater ones to come will so operate as to give a chance of success to the Federal cause. The *language* of some of the Federal newspapers is perhaps a little too violent at this time, though the sentiments are just. Strictures will be continually made on the conduct of the administration, and perhaps they are as useful as they are unavoidable. Errors, vices, and crimes must be pointed out, but it should be done in a manner that will not exasperate those whom it is expected to convince. No effectual remedy can be applied to our affairs until its necessity is strongly and extensively felt, and a sense of common danger shall unite more closely the real friends of the country. Mr. Dexter, who has a temporary residence in my neighborhood, took family dinner with me yesterday. He still blames us for not supporting and adhering to Mr. Adams, notwithstanding we were deserted, betrayed, and denounced. We agreed, however, in reprobating Mr. Jefferson as more weak and more wicked than we had thought him. Mr. Dexter is satisfied that the present administration is diligently employed in ransacking the public offices in search for faults, and documents to prove them. He thinks, too, there must unavoidably be found among the infinitude of transactions many which to the public eye may be made to appear improper, though at the time

then cautiously introducing the procedure since become infamous as the "spoils system," chose to treat as nullities. Goodrich was removed, and a man named Bishop appointed. The merchants of New Haven remonstrated against the change. Bishop held several state offices already, and was nearly eighty years of age. To meet their objections and to justify removing Goodrich, Jefferson, after pointing out that Bishop was considered competent to hold other offices, forcibly replied that Franklin, at the same period of life, was "an ornament to human nature." This was conclusive. See Randall's Life of Jefferson, II. 660; Works of Jefferson, IV. 402. The real explanation, perhaps, of the appointment of Bishop, a man so old that he could not see to write his name, is to be found in the fact that his son, a briefless lawyer, was a prominent young Democrat, who had recently delivered two orations in praise of his party principles. The second of these productions was devoted to an elaborate parallel between Jefferson and Jesus Christ.

they were right, and that they will be able by the use of such means, and perhaps some real misconducts of some former officers, to inflame the public mind to a great degree against honest and faithful men. I do not believe that the sensible and well-disposed part of the community will be the dupes of these abominable arts; but I can easily conceive that the bulk of the people should be deceived. Our elections, as well as other incidents, prove that we are grown and growing worse in this State. Our *best* men think more justly than ever on the subject of government, but their influence over public opinion is less than usual. The belief is daily extending that our affairs must necessarily grow much worse before they can grow much better. I confess myself to entertain this belief, though I admit that the efforts of good men may very much mitigate the evils, by assisting the public mind to comprehend the nature and true tendencies of all that passes under its eye. We are destined in this country, as in all the free states who have gone before us, to sacrifice the essence of liberty to the spirit of democracy. We are now and have always been more democratic in our opinions and temper than the form of our government. The tendency of the latter has been to balance, to regulate, and to correct the former; but its force, from the nature of its structure, was insufficient. It is in effect already overcome. Our government is in the hands of its enemies, and it is placed there because they are its enemies. It is intrusted to them, because it is believed that they would not use its powers for those purposes for which the government was professedly constituted. A candidate for Congress recommends himself to a majority of the voters by inducing or allowing them to believe that he would sacrifice the permanent interests of the nation to the passions and prejudices of the *populace* rather than restrain those passions or resist those prejudices. I will not at this time give an opinion of what might be done in a society like that of New England, and especially the State of Connecticut; but as a general observation, verified by experience and explicable on known principles of human nature, it may be said that democracy tends always to place power in the worst men's hands. The most desperate and audacious men are the most likely to govern. If, by any fortunate concurrence of circumstances, good men are employed at first, the tendency is every day stronger to raise bad men to their places, and from bad to worse, until the excess of the evil brings the remedy.

I had heard *by accident*, some days ago, that you and Mrs. Wolcott contemplated a visit here. I at first disbelieved it, because I had hoped that a visit here would be a visit to my house, where I should be happy to see you quartered. We are in a very pleasant village, five miles from the centre of Boston, sufficiently retired, yet within visiting distance of several agreeable neighbors, besides the accessibility of town friends. My family consists of Mrs. Cabot and my only daughter (a girl of sixteen) and myself. My eldest son, Charles, is at the Isle of France, beyond the Cape of Good Hope; my second son, Henry, a lad of eighteen, is in a law office at Boston; and my youngest son, Edward, a lad of seventeen, is in an accompting house. These two last visit us on Saturday evening every week, and pass the Sabbath. We all enjoy good health, and have no more of the "*plagues*" of life than we ought to have on every principle. My farm is very good as well as pleasant, and my love of ease is more gratified than is salutary. I am not rich, yet my income is as great as my expenses, and my expenses as great as my desires. Mrs. Cabot is in better health than when you knew her. We visit very little, yet we are not long solitary. A single man and three females form our list of domestics, the former of whom drives us round the country every fine day. The labor of my farm is performed altogether by a tenant, to whom I give specific benefits, that he may have no control over the management; and the benefits are liberal, that he may be happy, and tied to me by his interest. When I have no living company, I call upon the dead, who are always ready to come from my library and entertain me. Among the friends who contribute greatly to my happiness, Mr. Ames is almost the only one with whom you are acquainted, but you can easily conceive how precious he is. Our intimacy, and I believe our mutual attachment and confidence, have continually increased. He lives seven miles from me, and sometimes takes my house in his way to or from Boston; and I often go to Dedham to see him. We never meet without talking of you, and expressing our desires to see you. I shall indulge this hope till it is realized. You know so well that Mrs. C. and I wish to see you and Mrs. Wolcott as our guests, that, when you come to this part of the country, you will certainly make our house your home.

Yours affectionately and faithfully, GEORGE CABOT.

Cabot to Gore.

March 27, 1802.

My dear Sir, — Nothing could give me more pleasure than the intelligence by your letter of the 11th of January. Our friend has his reward for all his patient, persevering attention and able management, and his reward is the approbation of the wise and good. There is none better; and I trust with these he will be content, so far as relates to externals.[1]

If I were not already vain in the belief that I had successfully broached and preached a *new* and salutary doctrine, I should be made so by what you have communicated to me on the subject of my arguments on the rights of neutral traders. If, however, I could have thought they would be used as auxiliaries to an author who proposes a regular and full display of the errors which prevail on this subject, I should have suggested to you and Mr. King an idea which occurred to me of the difference between the United States and the northern powers of Europe; which is, that the latter have an immediate interest in avoiding search, as they could then supply the vanquished belligerent with naval stores and other articles acknowledged to be contraband. To those nations, — say, Denmark, Sweden, and Holland, — this would be more lucrative than the other branches of trade which, upon the existing system, they partake of in war. But to us and other nations the advantage of trading for belligerents, with our own capital, as allowed by the law of nations, infinitely outweighs every possible profit from the other source. The causes of this difference, as *local* position, &c., will readily occur to you.

I had a great treat from Ellsworth, who gave me in detail much information which I desired. I should enjoy many hours with you in hearing the condition of France described, but I cannot reproach you for refraining from such an endless subject on paper.

At the distance you are, it is possible you may think the Federalists have been too ardent; but I am persuaded they have retarded the revolution which is begun. It is a fact that Jefferson would have displaced officers until he had excited a general fever among the people; but he was restrained by *some of his counsellors*, who were evidently alarmed at the public indignation which they saw

[1] The loss of Mr. Gore's letter renders it impossible to determine who the person here alluded to was, but I suppose it to have been Mr. King.

rising. They had resolved (as Mason informs me) to remonstrate or expostulate in writing, if he did not desist. I am not informed who these counsellors were, but concluded they could be no other than Madison and Gallatin, the latter of whom must foresee a total failure of revenue, if faithful officers are displaced and worthless demagogues put into their places.

I rejoice exceedingly that after so tedious a delay you are likely to put a finishing hand to the business of your commission in a manner that will satisfy you and give so much pleasure to good men. You will be entitled to all their gratitude, and will receive it.

I should fill my paper, but a visitor obliges me to say no more than that I am

Your sincere and affectionate friend, G. CABOT.

WOLCOTT TO CABOT.

LITCHFIELD, Aug. 28, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR, — At the close of the week after I left you, I had the pleasure of arriving here and finding my family well. Nothing happened differently from what I could have wished, except not having an opportunity to converse a few hours with our friend Ames, who had been called to Boston on business the day we parted.

I often think of the felicity of your situation; and you will believe me, when I assure you that the reflection affords me the highest pleasure. In the vicinity of one of our most wealthy and polished towns, surrounded with those friends whose society you prefer, with a mind disposed to review the events which have passed and in a situation which affords you early information of those which are passing, you at once realize the great objects of human pursuit. May you long live to enjoy them, and, if possible, may they be increased.

The newspapers mention that the Moors have declared war against the United States, and that Mr. Jefferson is, according to his system of pacific warfare, sending out *presents* to preserve *peace* and *frigates* to maintain *war*. It is the sole object of the administration to acquire popularity. The *Magi* of Virginia imagine that it would be unpopular either to make *war* or pay *tribute*, and to avoid censure they do *both*. Will it not be well to inquire how this double-faced system is to be reconciled with economy?

When you write, will you inform me whether either of the collectors in *Essex* county are supposed to have been removed on the ground of official neglects. I presume, from my knowledge of the men, that nothing of the kind is pretended. What are the characters of Mr. Lee and Mr. Warren? Mr. Lyman I know. I shall want this information for future use.

I remain as ever your friend, OLIVER WOLCOTT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, Sept. 8, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR, — As soon as we learned that you had missed Ames, we regretted exceedingly that we had permitted you to leave us until the following morning. I am glad, however, that your tour has been finished with the happy sight of your family *all well.*

I think it probable that the collector of Marblehead (Mr. Gerry) has been removed for keeping back the public money. He is said to be deficient four or five thousand dollars; and I am informed his brother Elbridge has written a letter from Cambridge to the merchants in Marblehead, proposing that *they* should advance by subscription a sufficient sum to balance his brother's account with the Treasury, and intimating that, if this was not done, he (Elbridge) could obtain for him a new appointment.* The precise facts will probably soon find their way to the press. It is worth remembering that Mr. S. R. Gerry was appointed by Washington, in compliance with Democratic solicitation *chiefly, if not solely.* I recollect well that the rival candidate, Colonel Joshua Orne, was zealously supported and strongly recommended by the Federalists. Mr. Warren, who is appointed to the place of Gerry, is said to decline: he thinks himself well entitled to a greater reward for his services and the claims he inherits from both father and mother. The family, I believe, consider themselves as the most efficient anti-Federalists. Mr. Hiller has been always esteemed a good officer and an honest man. His office is not taken from him for any fault in his character or conduct; but Colonel Lee wanted it extremely, and the government wanted Colonel Lee's support, which, however, is not powerful, for he is not a man of much political influence or information. He was an officer of good reputation in the

* [Query. — Is not Elbridge surety for Samuel Russell Gerry? — G. C.]

army, which he left in 1778, I believe. He has been an industrious man and good citizen since, always friendly to order, and would not have been arranged on the Jacobin side but for the temptation of a good office. His property was exhausted, and his family very large. I understand he has visited the Federal city since the reign of Democracy commenced, and that when he returned it was reported by his children that he would be appointed to the office of Mr. Hiller.[1] Mr. Tyng was unquestionably a valuable acquisition to the government, and has been so considered at the Treasury long since the new administration begun its career. He is without fault as an officer, and in the highest estimation for probity, good sense, and dignity. As a man, *all parties* at Newburyport lament his removal. Your sincere friend,

G. CABOT.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, Oct. 21, 1802.

MY DEAR SIR,—I cannot but approve the intention of your judicial corps to unite in a memorial or remonstrance to Congress.[2] They will doubtless prepare the most forcible argument the subject admits, and this will be the less difficult to perform because of the ample discussion it has already received. There are two ideas which ought to be urged with perspicuity, to justify completely, *in the minds of the community*, this proceeding of the judges. One is that the Constitution, having rendered judicial commissions irrevocable, except for misbehavior, evidently contemplated a resistance on the part of the judges to all attempts to remove them for any other cause; and therefore, second, if the judges should silently acquiesce, they would be said by one part of the community to have tamely surrendered a public trust, and by the other their silence would be construed into an acknowledgment that their removal was

[1] Collector of Salem.

[2] This refers to the repeal of the Judiciary Act, and the number of judges thereby deprived of office. This is not the place to enter into a discussion as to the expediency of the measure at this particular time; but it may be said that nothing is better settled than the right of the Legislature to legislate out of existence a judicial body. Not many years ago, this was done in Massachusetts as the only method of reforming and reconstituting the bench of what is now the Superior Court. Nevertheless, it is a dangerous expedient, and one justifiable only in the last resort.

constitutional. It seems to me these ideas may be so stated as to make the interference of the judges a manifest duty. Our newspaper account of the appointment of *Stephen* Cross to the collectorship was erroneous. I was shocked at reading that this man,* who was early displaced by Washington for misconduct, should be again placed in the same office. But it turns out to be *Ralph* Cross who is commissioned, — a man much below Stephen in reputation; indeed, his truth or integrity would be very little trusted in the part of the country where he lives. He once held an office under Mr. Collector Tyng, but was discovered to connive at smuggling or practising deceit in the weight or measure of dutied goods; and for this unfaithfulness in his office was displaced by Mr. Tyng. I shall not be surprised if appointments of this sort should be followed by deficiencies of revenue. The Democrats will be favored or allowed to smuggle; and, should this be perceived by the Federalists, they will not submit to a ruinous partiality. Yours affectionately, G. CABOT.

* [Stephen Cross was collector prior to Wigglesworth. — G. C.]

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BROOKLINE, Dec. 20, 1802.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have never reflected on the situation and duty of the judges of the Supreme Court, in relation to the outrage committed by Congress on the Constitution. Presuming, however, that your opinion is correct in this, as I am accustomed to think it in every thing connected with our affairs, it shows how little dependence there is, even on good men, to support our system of policy and government. The aberration of Mr. Adams, in 1798 or 1799, shows the same thing; and his strange answer to the address of his friends, lately, shows it in a still stronger light.[1] It is no very extraordinary interpretation of his disclaimer of measures not specified, *that they are those which his opponents dislike;* while the "some" and "other" measures, for which indirect apologies are offered, imply that much has been wrong. It is apparent, too, that this wrong is to be attributed to men who gave to him and his administration the most efficient support.

[1] I take this to refer to the answer to an address from the inhabitants of Quincy, in 1802. See Works of John Adams, I. 602. The address is given in John Adams's Works, but not the answer.

I have a great curiosity to see the manner in which Congress will treat the representation of your corps.[1] The quotation you furnish pleases me, because it presents to public view a motive which ought to govern, and which every man who has a head or heart ought to approve.

You will be a little surprised when you learn that I am about to exchange the scene which you justly admire for a town life; but it is determined that I go to Boston as soon as accommodations can be provided there and my place here disposed of. I shall always be as recluse as I can be; but I have not thought it right to shut up a daughter six months in every year in the country, and I cannot afford to hold my farm, if I live in town. My other children, too (my three sons), will be weaned from me, and I from them, more than is reconcilable to my natural disposition, if I do not live where they can see me without great sacrifices of time and business. But, wherever I may be and however circumstanced, I beg to be remembered among your affectionate friends, and to be allowed the hope of hearing from you often and seeing you again. Yours faithfully, G. CABOT.

WOLCOTT TO CABOT.

LITCHFIELD, Feb. 7, 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I thank you sincerely for your favor of December 20th. The change of residence which you meditate will, I hope and believe, as much increase your happiness as it must be productive of advantage to your children; and, in this view, the motives of your resolution are certainly proper, and will be applauded by all your acquaintance.

The enclosed paper will inform you that I have determined on a removal to New York immediately. My family will remain in the country till next autumn. To this change of situation I am impelled by a kind of *necessity*. I have been contented here; but my property is not sufficient to employ my time, or to furnish the means of educating and providing for my family as I wish. This State furnishes no employments in which I can engage, except those of a public nature, and with those I have been satiated.

The terms on which I have concluded to enter upon a new career of active business are beneficial and as safe as possible; and

[1] Wolcott was appointed judge of the second circuit by President Adams.

the gentlemen associated with me are all men of ample fortunes and respectability. Where prior engagements and connections do not interfere, I hope to experience the patronage and encouragement of my acquaintance. Upon my *friends*, and upon you in particular, I wish to impose the tax of recommending me to business, on suitable occasions, in such terms as propriety and justice will permit.

I amused myself, a few weeks ago, in some observations upon the relative circumstances of different sections of the United States, the result of which I sent to Mr. Ames, as a sort of reply to an interesting letter which I received from him. This letter he will show you. It becomes more and more evident that a crisis is impending. It is most probable that we shall soon be engaged in a war. The idea is rapidly diffusing among Democrats that the present administration is incompetent; but, though Jefferson & Co. are going down, no desirable substitute yet appears to be coming up. The State of New York, in the councils of which we are much interested, appears to me to be divided into State parties, by which national politics are but little regarded. Governor Clinton is the only man living who can preserve the least appearance of union among the factions into which the present majority is divided. Mr. Burr has a considerable popular influence with the secondary classes of society in the city of New York; but, in the *State*, no *party* can rally under his *name*. His friends are numerous, and consist of active, subtle, vigilant spirits, who are able to "perplex maturest councils," and who place no confidence in the present system of our country. These men are not Federalists, and neither expect nor wish the Federalists to regain power or influence. Against a common foe, they are however occasionally united with the Federalists, and are thus able to neutralize many of the measures of the Clintonians.

I am, dear sir, your affectionate friend,

OLIVER WOLCOTT.

CABOT TO KING.

BOSTON, July 1, 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — We hear from New York that Mr. King is arrived, and confirms our accounts of war. The first gives me an unmingled pleasure, the last excites a mixed sentiment of joy and anxiety.

I have constantly believed that the struggle between France and England must continue, until the power of the former is effectually abridged, or *the latter falls.* You can judge best of the issue; but, after every allowance for the immense advantages of force on the side of France, with all continental Europe at her disposal, and the wishes of all the fools and knaves throughout the universe on her side, I entertain great hopes and confidence in the final success of England. She has means and motives sufficient, which, I trust, will not be unavailing for want of talents to employ them.

A letter from Paris of the 13th May states that, previous to the departure of Lord Whitworth, a despatch from Russia had been received, which announced the consent of Alexander to guarantee Malta according to the terms of the treaty of Amiens, and that Marcott dissuaded Lord Whitworth as much as he could from leaving Paris. This intelligence comes from Cassenove, an *intimate* of Talleyrand, and therefore may be true. Cassenove also speaks of Prussia as very closely connected with France. If all this is so, England exhibits the most interesting spectacle which my imagination can conceive.

The cession of Louisiana is an excellent thing for France. It is like selling us a ship after she is surrounded by a British fleet. It puts into safe keeping what she could not keep herself; for England would take Louisiana in the first moment of war, without the loss of a man. France would neither settle it nor protest it: she is therefore rid of an incumbrance that wounded her pride, receives money, and regains the friendship of our populace. I pray you to make my best regards acceptable to Mrs. King. I think you too wise to seek public honors; and I hope you are too patriotic to shun them, if they seek you.

Your faithful and affectionate friend, GEORGE CABOT.

P. S. An expression which I well remember in a letter from you, after your visit to Paris, leads me to expect the pleasure of seeing you here. I know nothing of the objections which may exist to your executing such an intention; and I can assure you it would give infinite pleasure to a great many people here, and especially to me.

CABOT TO KING.

BOSTON, July 9, 1803.

MY DEAR SIR, — I received from you, at the beginning of this week, the declaration of the British government and their correspondence with France; and I take great pleasure in observing that so much dignity and firmness as well as moderation have been displayed by the British ministry. Had I known the secrets, however, I should have trembled lest Malta should have been given up, which would have been of more consequence than all the other conquests of Great Britain and twenty sail of the line beside. Malta is the spot *intended by Providence* for Great Britain, to enable her to cover Egypt, the Levant and Adriatic, to watch Toulon and overawe the whole Mediterranean. Nothing should tempt Great Britain to yield it to France, while France remains so formidable.

You give me no conjectures on the manner in which the rupture will be treated by the opposition. Should they in the true spirit of faction clamor against the war, and pretend that the peace might have been maintained with honor and safety, it will be a difficult task for ministers to carry on the war with that spirit and energy which its dangers demand. But should the opposition (contrary to natural expectation) admit the necessity of the war and of a continued exertion, till the power of France is in some way abridged, I should not doubt of a successful issue. The English possess means enough; but, to use them, they must resort to unpalatable measures, and these can hardly be exerted against a powerful opposition.

Our Jacobins here already indulge their French feelings. They allow that the success of England, at least in defending herself, is necessary to keep France from troubling us; yet, such is their profligacy and their hatred, that they rather would risk the liberty of our country than see the English beat the French.

I hear very seldom lately from our friend Hamilton, whom you know I love *excessively*. When you see him, I pray you tender him my affectionate regards, and believe me ever, with sincere attachment,

Your faithful GEORGE CABOT.

Cabot to Gore.

Boston, Nov. 15, 1803.

My dear Sir, — All our attention is again engrossed by the struggle on your side the ocean, which must terminate, at last, in the establishment of universal empire or the reduction of France to its ancient limits. I am still a believer that the latter will be the issue, and that the Bourbons will resume the government of that turbulent nation. It is said that we talk more of the invasion than you do, which is very possible. My own opinion has been invariable that it would be happy for England, and for the whole world, that this desperate attempt should be *seriously made;* but I have never for a moment thought it would be made, and it is not difficult to conceive of sufficient reasons for all the menaces and preparations, nor the various modes in which they may eventuate without a serious attempt to conquer England and overthrow its government.

We proceed here democratically and quietly, all the noisy having their mouths stopped by loaves and fishes, or in immediate expectation of them.

Your faithful and affectionate friend, George Cabot.

Cabot to Pickering.

Boston, Dec. 10, 1803.

My dear Sir, — I had just finished the reading of your speech on the Louisiana bill, when your letter of the 28th was put into my hand. I am greatly pleased with both; and although I have other objections to the treaty than those you have urged, yet I am sensible yours are more indisputable and much the most proper to be offered in a public debate. In a word, I think the title to this great province was to be tried in the great court-martial now sitting in Europe. If France can maintain her predominancy, she will through Spain do what she pleases; and if she is beaten, as I think she will be, her cession is not worth the money, for she could never in that case have settled it or disturbed our navigation.

I am not suprised, though I am mortified, to see your colleague[1] assisting to accommodate the Constitution to the views of the party

[1] John Quincy Adams. He and Pickering were at this time senators from Massachusetts.

in power, when it is so obvious that the influence of our part of the Union must be diminished by the acquisition of more weight at the other extremity. I think, however, a paper constitution too feeble a barrier to obstruct a triumphant majority in their course, and I should expect to see any alteration which they require to be made.

I do not think you overrate my *indolence*, which you civilly call "tranquillity;" but I beg you to understand that I am not "disturbed" by reading the longest letters my industrious friends may have the goodness at any time to write. I love to hear, to read, and to think (if not deeply), and I love to converse, but I confess I am too lazy to write as much as my friends would have good rights to require; and on this account, as well as some others, I am always likely to be so great a delinquent that I must prove an unworthy correspondent to any sensible, punctual man. There is some account in this day's "Centinel" of Mr. Adams's motion, &c. I know not from whence it comes.

Our newspapers will give you all the foreign news, say from England, late in October. You will please to remember that I have uniformly discredited the serious invasion of England. I learn nothing which ought to change my opinion, but my wishes are stronger than ever that I may be wrong. A serious attempt would be fatal to Buonaparte, and would probably change the face of all the rest of Europe for the better. I know there are many military men who entertain different views, but in this case the issue will not, or at least certainly ought not to, depend on a battle or the skilfulness of a general. The defence of England may be made certain, and no Marlborough among them. Divisions of one to twenty thousand men will be conducted by as brave officers as any in the world, and new ones will be formed faster than old ones destroyed. If it were to happen, therefore, contrary to all human expectations, that the whole French force, say two or three hundred thousand men, were to land, I have not the smallest doubt they would be *finally* exterminated. But I do not yet find that any force is prepared capable of beating the English flotillas and small craft with which they abound. Putting the navy of both countries out of the question, so far as from frigates upward, and I think there is no naval force on the French coast capable of fighting their way to the English shore. Ireland may possibly be attacked by twenty thousand men, which in a peculiarly favorable

moment may escape from Brest and other ports in men-of-war; but, though this would be troublesome, it would not be fatal, and should not pass as a thing worthy the mountain's labor.

Your kinsman, Mr. S. Williams, I understand, gives his opinion on the 23d of October, that Spain will be drawn into the war. I fear it, but hope it will be avoided.

Your faithful and affectionate friend, GEORGE CABOT.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, Jan. 4, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR, — I know that the mind which does not find consolation in its own reflections cannot derive it from any foreign source. Even the sympathy of a friend, while it soothes, may cause the wound inflicted by death to bleed afresh. I learn that you have lost a son, amiable and of great promise. For his parents' sake, and for society, I lament it. It reminds me of my own bereavements, and renews my tears. Twice it has pleased God to lay heavily his hand upon me, and to take away the objects of my tender affection and of my best hopes. The lapse of seven and of ten years has not removed my affliction. Ordinary deaths, indeed, pass by as common things. It is the like affliction of a *friend* which excites my grief anew. Accept the tribute of a tear for yours.

But we do not grieve as those who have no hope. We look forward to a brighter and a happier world, where sorrow shall cease, "and where all tears shall be wiped away from our eyes." How blest are they who entertain such hopes! How wretched those (like numbers round me here) whose views extend not beyond the grave, and whose best refuge is annihilation! In the midst of my painful recollections, I sometimes check myself, and ask, is it for my *children*, or for *myself*, that my tears start afresh? I have found my grief too selfish. I looked to *them* for confort and joy in my advancing years: they were indeed "very pleasant to me." But "they have been taken from the evil to come." The events of every day serve to abate the desire of life, to point our attention to a life to come, and to check all other anxieties than to pursue the means of obtaining it, determined, however, to wait "all the days of our appointed time, till our change come;" in the mean while bearing with Christian fortitude

the afflictions inseparable from humanity, aiming to fulfil every duty, enjoying the good which Providence bestows, and anticipating the never-ending happiness which is the object of the faith and of the hope of every virtuous and pious soul.

To your excellent wife as well as to you I address these sentiments, and to both express my sincere attachment and esteem.

Adieu. TIMOTHY PICKERING.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BOSTON, Jan. 10, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR, — The loss of a son,[1] whom I loved too well to part with, has so absorbed my thoughts that, had I been as faithful in my correspondence as I am in my feelings of friendship, I could not until this moment have acknowledged several favors which I have received from you.

The papers you have sent, and especially the masterly speech of Mr. Tracy, display the subject of the Presidential election much more amply than had been done before; and, if party principles were not stronger than State jealousies, the small States would assuredly resist the innovation. I am told that your colleague vindicates the part he early took by referring to the former opinion and instruction of Massachusetts; but surely, if it were even admitted that in the abstract the amendment were better than the Constitution, we would not be so far the "dupes of our own virtues" as to subserve the pernicious designs of our opponents. This we should certainly do by agreeing to change the constitutional mode of election in the manner proposed and at this juncture of time. I confess I was once desirous of a change of the kind now contemplated, believing it an indispensable means of preserving the government in good hands, and the country from the fangs of France; but we failed. Our opponents now wish the same thing for purposes they approve, but which we think dishonorable and ruinous. Shall we be so weak as to promote in this manner the views and perpetuate the power of those in whom we cannot confide? I am sure they will lessen their respect for us, if we do. Your constant and affectionate friend,

GEORGE CABOT.

[1] See p. 303.

Cabot to Pickering.

Boston, Jan. 14, 1804.

My dear Sir, — The generous sympathy and just sentiments of consolation expressed in your letter to Mrs. Cabot and me, and which friendship alone could inspire, affect us most sensibly; and, while for a moment they revive the keenness of our sorrows, they tend permanently to blunt their edge. We have lost a child deservedly dear to us, but in the midst of our sufferings we do not forget that he who seemed to live only for the happiness of others may have died to be happy himself. Mrs. Cabot begs that with mine you will accept the assurance of her grateful and sincere esteem and attachment.

Your ever faithful friend, George Cabot.

Pickering to Cabot.

City of Washington, Jan. 29, 1804.

My dear Sir, — A friend of mine in Pennsylvania,[1] in answering a letter, lately asked me, "Is not a great deal of our chagrin founded on personal dislikes, the pride of opinion, and the mortification of disappointment?" I replied, or to speak correctly, I prepared the following reply. But when I had finished, perceiving the sentiments too strong for the latitude of Pennsylvania, and perhaps for the nerves of my friend, I changed the form, and now address them to you.

To those questions, perhaps to a certain degree, an affirmative answer may be given. I have more than once asked myself, for what are we struggling? Our lands yield their increase, our commerce flourishes, we are building houses, "are marrying and given in marriage," yet we are dissatisfied: not because we envy the men in office, — to most of us a private life is most desirable. The Federalists are dissatisfied, because they see the public morals debased by the corrupt and corrupting system of our rulers. Men are tempted to become apostates, not to Federalism merely, but to virtue and to religion and to good government. Apostasy and original depravity are the qualifications for official honors and emoluments, while men of sterling worth are displaced and held up to popular contempt and scorn. And shall we sit still, until

[1] Judge Peters.

this system shall universally triumph? until even in the Eastern States the principles of genuine Federalism shall be overwhelmed? Mr. Jefferson's plan of destruction has been gradually advancing. If at once he had removed from office all the Federalists, and given to the people such substitutes as we generally see, even his followers (I mean the mass) would have been shocked. He is still making progress in the same course; and he has the credit of being the real source of all the innovations which threaten the subversion of the Constitution, and the prostration of every barrier erected by it for the protection of the *best*, and therefore to him the most obnoxious, part of the community. His instruments manifest tempers so malignant, so inexorable, as convince observing Federalists that the mild manners and habits of our countrymen are the only security against their extreme vengeance. How long we shall enjoy even this security, God only knows. And must we with folded hands wait the result, or timely think of other protection? This is a delicate subject. The principles of our Revolution point to the remedy, — a separation. That this can be accomplished, and without spilling one drop of blood, I have little doubt. One thing I know, that the rapid progress of innovation, of corruption, of oppression, forces the idea upon many a reflecting mind. *Indeed*, we are not uneasy because "unplaced." But we look with dread on the ultimate issue, — an issue not remote, unless some new and extraordinary obstacle be opposed, and that speedily; for paper constitutions are become as clay in the hands of the potter. The people of the East cannot reconcile their habits, views, and interests with those of the South and West. The latter are beginning to rule with a rod of iron. When not convenient to violate the Constitution, it must be altered; and it will be made to assume any shape as an instrument to crush the Federalists. The independence of the judges is now directly assailed, and the majority are either so blind or so well trained that it will most undoubtedly be destroyed. Independently of specific charges, as ground of impeachment, John Randolph, I am informed, avows this doctrine: that the clause in the Constitution granting to the judges their offices during *good behavior* was intended merely to guard them against *executive removals*, and not at all to restrain the two Houses of Congress, on whose representation the President ought to remove them! We should really be safer without any constitution, for then oppressive acts might excite public attention; but while

the popular tyrants shelter themselves under the forms or the name of the Constitution, tortured and interpreted to suit their views, the people will not be alarmed.

By the Philadelphia papers, I see that the Supreme Court judges of Pennsylvania are to be hurled from their seats on the pretence that, in punishing one Thomas Passmore for a contempt, they acted illegally and tyrannically. I presume that Shippen, Yates, and Smith are to be removed by the Governor, on the representation of the Legislature. And when such grounds are taken, in the national and State Legislatures, to destroy the rights of the judges, whose rights can be safe? Why destroy *them*, unless as the prelude to the destruction of every influential Federalist, and of every man of considerable property, who is not of the reigning sect? New judges, of characters and tempers suited to the object, will be the selected ministers of vengeance. I am not willing to be sacrificed by such popular tyrants. My life is not worth much, but, if it must be offered up, let it rather be in the hope of obtaining a more stable government, under which my children, at least, may enjoy freedom with security. Some Connecticut gentlemen (and they are all well informed and discreet) assure me that, if the leading Democrats in that State were to get the upper hand (which would be followed by a radical change in their *unwritten* constitution), they should not think themselves safe, either in person or property, and would therefore immediately quit the State. I do not believe in the practicability of a long-continued union. A Northern confederacy would unite congenial characters, and present a fairer prospect of public happiness; while the Southern States, having a similarity of habits, might be left "to manage their own affairs in their own way." If a separation were to take place, our mutual wants would render a friendly and commercial intercourse inevitable. The Southern States would require the naval protection of the Northern Union, and the products of the former would be important to the navigation and commerce of the latter. I believe, indeed, that, if a Northern confederacy were forming, our Southern brethren would be seriously alarmed, and probably abandon their virulent measures. But I greatly doubt whether prudence should suffer the connection to continue much longer. They are so devoted to their chief, and he is so necessary to accomplish their plans of misrule and oppression, that as they have projected an alteration of the Constitution to secure his next election, with a con-

tinued preponderance of their party, so it would not surprise me, were they, soon after his next election, to choose him President for life. I am assured that some of his blind worshippers in South Carolina have started the idea.

But *when* and *how* is a separation to be effected? If, as many think, Federalism (by which I mean the solid principles of government applied to a federate republic, — principles which are founded in justice, in sound morals, and religion, and whose object is the security of life, liberty, and property against popular delusion, injustice, and tyranny), if, I say, Federalism is crumbling away in New England, there is no time to be lost, lest it should be overwhelmed, and become unable to attempt its own relief. Its last refuge is New England, and immediate exertion, perhaps, its only hope. It must begin in Massachusetts. The proposition would be welcomed in Connecticut; and could we doubt of New Hampshire? But New York must be associated; and how is her concurrence to be obtained? She must be made the centre of the confederacy. Vermont and New Jersey would follow of course, and Rhode Island of necessity. Who can be consulted, and who will take the lead? The Legislatures of Massachusetts and Connecticut meet in May, and of New Hampshire in the same month or in June. The subject has engaged the contemplation of many. The Connecticut gentlemen have seriously meditated upon it. We suppose the British provinces in Canada and Nova Scotia, at no remote period, perhaps without delay, and with the assent of Great Britain, may become members of the Northern league. Certainly that government can feel only disgust at our present rulers. She will be pleased to see them crestfallen. She will not regret the proposed division of empire. If with their own consent she relinquishes her provinces, she will be rid of the charge of maintaining them, while she will derive from *them*, as she does from *us*, all the commercial returns which her merchants now receive. A liberal treaty of amity and commerce will form a bond of union between Great Britain and the Northern confederacy highly useful to both.

Are these ideas visionary or impracticable? Do they not merit consideration? If they do, let me know, in such way as you deem expedient, what you think. Tracy[1] has written to several of his most distinguished friends in Connecticut, and may soon receive

[1] Uriah Tracy, senator from Connecticut.

their answers. R. Griswold,[1] examining the finances, has found that the States above mentioned, to be embraced by the Northern confederacy, now pay as much (or more) of the public revenues as would discharge their share of the public debts due those States and abroad, leaving out the millions given for Louisiana.

Perhaps a crisis may occur to mark the moment for decisive measures. Perhaps the violation of the Constitution in the arbitrary removal of the judges may hasten such a crisis. The signal, a bold but safe step by members of Congress.

I am, &c., T. PICKERING.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

FEB. 14, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have read with great interest your letter of the 3d.[2] The subject is as important as it is delicate, and has often occupied my thoughts. All the evils you describe and many more are to be apprehended; but I greatly fear that a separation would be no remedy, *because the source of them is in the political theories of our country and in ourselves.* A separation at some period not very remote may probably take place. The first impression of it is even now favorably received by many; but I cannot flatter myself with the expectation of essential good to proceed from it, while we retain maxims and principles which all experience, and, *I may add, reason too*, pronounce to be impracticable and absurd. Even in New England, where there is among the body of the people more wisdom and virtue than in any other part of the United States, we are full of errors, which no reasoning could eradicate, if there were a Lycurgus in every village. *We are democratic altogether*, and I hold democracy in its natural operation to be *the government of the worst.* If democracy has not produced among us all the mischief to which it necessarily tends, the causes are not difficult to be traced, and I am not without hopes that the same or other causes may still operate to retard and mitigate those evils which cannot be wholly averted; but it is, in my mind, expecting too much of mankind to suppose that they will cease to act from impulse and habitually act from reflection. It is the ordinary duty

[1] Roger Griswold, member of Congress from Connecticut, a leading Federalist, and afterwards governor of his native State.

[2] "Probably Jan. 29, in rough draft, which was sent Feb. 3." This is the explanation of Mr. Octavius Pickering, in a manuscript note appended to this letter.

of every just government to restrain men from doing what their vicious inclinations impel them to do, and coerce them to the performance of duties to which they are disinclined. Hence, in popular governments, men are driven from office for performing their duty, and others put in their places who violate theirs. The people will not knowingly employ men nor voluntarily support a government whose acts contravene their favorite purposes, which are often those of their worst passions; and it is not unusual to see men of tolerably good characters urgent to choose for rulers those whom they know to be the worst, because, though they do not approve of profligacy and immorality, yet they will not on this account sacrifice sinister objects of their own. While I hold that a government altogether popular is in effect a government of the *populace*, I maintain that no government can be relied on that has not a material portion of the democratic mixture in its composition. The great and hitherto insurmountable difficulty has been to establish and maintain the empire of principles against the assaults of popular passions. This can only be done by such an organization as supplies somewhere vital powers which the popular fury cannot extinguish. The independent judiciary was the best feature in our national system, but it is abolishing; and it may be asked who shall prevent the people from destroying their own institutions. You would hope that in New England we should be all alive to guard this sacred principle, but it is not so; and I doubt whether it is possible by any alarm of this kind to excite a zeal among the people. We look with apathy on things of this sort.

At the same time that I do not desire a separation at this moment, I add that *it is not practicable* without the intervention of some cause which should be very generally felt and distinctly understood as chargeable to the misconduct of our Southern masters: such, for example, as a war with Great Britain, manifestly provoked by our rulers. But they will not hazard a war, though they will wantonly excite much animosity. Without some single event of this kind to rouse us, I am of opinion we must bear the evils which the delusion of democracy is bringing upon us, until men of all parties in our country can be brought to acknowledge them and unite in the application of a remedy. Should this conviction be general in New England, I think something might be done, in spite of all opposition from the South; but, until it is general, a great Jacobin party here, supported by the nation and its

government, would be likely to triumph. If, as is probable, we do not find ourselves strong enough now to act with success the part proposed, I am sensible of the dangers you point out, and see no way of escaping them. We shall go the way of all governments wholly popular, from bad to worse, until the evils, no longer tolerable. shall generate their own remedies.

There was a time when I believed that New England might get along very well with a system of government which had proved in other times and places inadequate to the purposes of social order, but I can truly say I have despaired of our success these ten years. The prosperity of these States, and the apparent soundness of their politics, may seem to confute this opinion; but, like the successful tide of experiment through the United States, much is to be attributed to the incalculable advantages derived from a neutral station in a world of war. And, in regard to our present politics, let me observe that there is no energy in the Federal party, and there could be none manifested without great hazard of losing the state government. Some of our best men in high stations are kept in office, because they forbear to exert any influence, and not because they possess right principles. They are permitted to have power, if they will not use it. It is happy for us that we have a governor[1] whose consummate prudence conciliates opponents without detaching friends, but he will cease to be popular the moment he dares to act with vigor. It must be nearly the same in New Hampshire and Connecticut. This latter State has given the best example of a self-governed people that the world has ever seen; but its system is nearly run out, and I doubt, if every honest man in the State were united, whether they could long prevent their opponents from getting the government. Let a solid peace take place in Europe, and the strength of their government would soon appear too feeble to enforce justice. I shall not be surprised to see Connecticut as remarkable for disseminating anarchical doctrines as it has been for a contrary character. It is to be feared that the superior information of the Connecticut people, while it gives them more power to produce political effects, will *not* give them better dispositions than others. Indeed, their education increases their wants more than their means of supplying them; and such people will of necessity become ungovernable when the acquisition of property is difficult. I doubt not some of our

[1] Caleb Strong.

friends from that State view this subject in the light now presented, but they are very reluctant to admit it. The fears they discover may, however, be considered as unequivocal evidence of their private opinion. If no man in New England could vote for legislators who was not possessed in his own right of two thousand dollars' *value in land*, we could do something better; but neither this nor other material improvements can be made by a fair consent of the people. I incline to the opinion that the essential alterations which may in future be made to amend our forms of government will be the consequences only of great suffering or the immediate effects of violence. If we should be made to feel a very great calamity from the abuse of power by the national administration, we might do almost any thing; but it would be idle to talk to the deaf, to warn the people of distant evils. By this time, you will suppose I am willing to do nothing but submit to fate. I would not be so understood. I am convinced we cannot do what is wished; but we can do much, if we work with nature (or the course of things), and not against her. A separation is now impracticable, because we do not feel the necessity or utility of it. The same separation then will be unavoidable, when our loyalty to the Union is generally perceived to be the instrument of debasement and impoverishment. If it is prematurely attempted, those few only will promote it who discern what is hidden from the multitude; and to those may be addressed, —

> "Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land,
> All fear, none aid you, and few understand."

I have said that a separation *now* is not desirable, because we should not remedy the evil, but should bring it home and aggravate it by cherishing and giving new sanctions to the causes which produce it. But, if a separation should by and by be produced by sufferings, I think it might be accompanied by important ameliorations of our theories.

You have doubtless seen the portraits of some of the New York patriots, which are said to be good likenesses. Some observations on the subject which appeared in the "Centinel" may be thought worth reading.

You see how unstudied I give you my thoughts. With equal unaffectedness, believe me

Always your friend, G. C.

CABOT TO KING.

BOSTON, March 17, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR, — In reply to your inquiry respecting the opinions of our Legislature on the subject of Louisiana, I can only speculate. The session is ended, and no one attempted to discover what was thought or what might be done. We add thousands to our possessions, but have long since discarded the idea of *security*. The *many* do not think at all, and the *few* think only to despond. Indeed, most men are compelled to admit that *our evils must be borne until their intolerability generate their cure.* Most of those which we fear must therefore happen before a remedy can be prescribed. An *experiment* has been suggested by some of our friends, to which I object that it is impracticable, and, if practicable, would be ineffectual. The thing proposed is obvious and natural, but it would now be thought too bold, and would be fatal to its advocates as public men; yet the time *may* soon come when it will be demanded by the people of the North and East, and then it will unavoidably take place. I am not satisfied that the thing itself is to be desired. My habitual opinions have been always strongly against it; and I do not see, in the present mismanagement, motives for changing my opinion. It is doubtless true that we are not so perfectly mad in New England as the people in some other States, especially those of the South; but here we are altogether Democratic in our principles, and those principles of necessity place power in the worst hands. If the favorable aspect of our State politics seems to contradict my opinion, I confess that those principles have not *yet* produced all the mischief to which they tend; but, at the same time, I insist that our appearance is deceptive, being better than the reality, and the reality better than can be well maintained. You see good men in high office here, contrary to the natural operation of Democratic election; but those men hold their powers upon the sole condition that they will not use them, and the moment they shall dare to exercise them with vigor they will cease to be popular, and of course cease to fill the high offices they now hold. There is an unusual apathy among the Federalists here. They have lost more of their vivacity than of their numbers. I fear they lose some of these. Our national administration may destroy judiciaries and constitutions, and make new ones without exciting much sensibility; but, if they had involved us by their folly and

baseness in a war with Great Britain, I believe New England might be roused to do *any thing* which her leading men should recommend. Some distinct general cause of evil like this, and fairly imputable to the wickedness or ignorance of those who govern, would be fatal to their power or to the union of the States. We are loyal to the national government, and can bear every species of public dishonor; but, the moment our loyalty appears to be made the instrument of our *impoverishment*, we shall be disposed to act with effect in defence of *all that is dear to us*. In the moral as in the natural world, we must in all operations consult the tendency of general laws. It is vain to attempt sailing against wind and tide: we ought to have the influence of one in our favor to make considerable progress, and of both to make the greatest. The longer I live, the more I think on the nature of man and of society, the more I am convinced of the absurdity of expecting ever to see a *self-governed people*, as we understand the terms. Men will act from the impulse of their passions. These lead them to seek power, property, &c., by means incompatible with order and justice. Government to enforce these is called to counteract and coerce those who (on our principles) have the control of the government. We love virtue and virtuous men; but we respect power only, and the powerful. If we choose a man to office, we displace him for doing the duties of it when these thwart our sinister views, and then it happens that good men are often found co-operating in the election of the bad, and to the exclusion of those whom as *men* they truly esteem. It is folly to expect mankind will act otherwise; and, therefore, although *the people must have a great share in every good government*, yet that share should not be so great as to destroy it at pleasure, or by the word of their mouth to impede its just offices. Viewing the subject in this light, I contemplate with pleasure the prosperous course of our affairs for many years past, and feel neither surprise nor disappointment at the change which is commenced. The first part has been better than we had any right to expect; and without derogating from the transcendent worth of men, who did every thing that time and circumstances would allow, I must attribute the success of their public measures in a great degree to favorable accidents, which, though external, have acted with great force on our internal affairs. We are now going on according to the course of nature, and shall follow those who have gone before us from bad to worse, till suffering, or the

fear of suffering *generally and deeply felt*, stimulates us to do better. Indeed, I expect no essential improvements in our systems but from suffering, from fear, or from force. I think no material change can be made except by those whom we call Jacobins. Good men would not, if they had opportunity, establish any system of sufficient force to protect itself. The violent and unprincipled are more likely to make a government independent of popular consent than their betters. I beg you, however, not to infer that, because I think we cannot do things impossible, I would not attempt every possible good, or that I do not think any great good can be accomplished. So far would that be from the truth, that I firmly believe we owe much of what we enjoy, and of what we hope for, to the influence of the Federal party. We are a minority, and unable to conquer the vast body which keeps the field; but we are so powerful that he is compelled to confine his movements to a narrow compass, lest he should give us an advantage over him. We have, therefore, the most commanding motives to preserve to our party all the weight we can, by adhering to the principles on which it is formed, and keep it well combined and well informed, prepared to think and act alike on every important occasion. In this way, we prevent some mischief entirely, and mitigate what we cannot wholly avert, and shall be able to soften every catastrophe in the political drama which must happen, and turn them to the best account.

I have lately received a long letter from our excellent friend Gore. He speaks of invasion as more likely than he used to think to be attempted. I wish I may be mistaken in the belief I constantly entertain, that it would never be undertaken. It would be happy for us and the world to have the attempt seriously made upon the largest scale; but I cannot for a moment be persuaded that Buonaparte will play so desperate a game. A hundred to one, he would not get over the Channel with fifty thousand men, and a hundred to one (in my opinion) that with one hundred thousand he would be destroyed. No: he may make little expeditions to burn a dock-yard, conquer Guernsey and Jersey, and land twenty thousand men in Ireland; but his force, when collected, will be chiefly useful to overawe Denmark, Prussia, &c., and perhaps to conquer them. It will be useful to influence the policy of every continental power, and, if necessary, to fight them; but he will not embark this host of soldiers to be drowned, taken, or shot, and give

to England the greatest triumph she ever had, and which she can never obtain, if he does not give her this kind of opportunity. You would give very great pleasure to many whom you esteem, if you were to execute what you intimate. To me, it would of all things be the most gratifying to review those familiar interviews, which have been among the most satisfactory hours of my life.

I should rejoice to see Burr win the race in your State, but I cannot approve of aid being given him by any of the *leading* Federalists.

When you next meet Hamilton, Benson, and Wolcott, give my affectionate regards to each of them.

Your faithful and affectionate friend, G. C.

Cabot to John Lowell, Jr.

Boston, July 18, 1804.

My dear Cousin,—I have received from you two very grateful letters, without having made you any return for either. I am not satisfied with myself by any excuse for this delay, knowing, as I do, how valuable every communication is from domestic friends to a man in remote countries. Your aunt and I have felt very sensibly the generous sympathy you expressed when we were depressed by affliction; and, I assure you, it alleviated our trouble to learn that you were recovering health and spirits. I trust you will fully renovate your former vigor by the journey you are to make.

Harry Lee is charged with newspapers of the day, which will announce and explain to you the public misfortune experienced here by the untimely death of Hamilton. You know how well his friends loved him, and all esteemed him. You can therefore judge of the general sensibility at his death. I have always thought his virtues surpassed those of other men almost as much as his talents. His errors, unfortunately for the country, were conspicuous, and diminished his influence, which otherwise would have been irresistible, and was always directed to the noblest purposes. All reflecting men seem now to be sensible that he was our *hope* in the crisis to which our affairs necessarily drive us. France has finished the first and principal piece of her drama, and it remains only to see *who* will come out as *manager*, when all appear in their own dresses. You judge rightly of the course of things here, because

such as you describe must be the course of all democracies. A democracy is in terms a solecism, as we understand it in the United States. It is absurd to expect any people will *voluntarily* and knowingly support men or systems which compel them to do what they wish to avoid, and restrain them from doing what they desire to do. Men may deliberately engage to give such support; but they will certainly violate those engagements as long as man is what he has always been, impelled to action by his passions. But, although we must deteriorate, I hope the condition and character of our country will render the process more tolerable than it commonly is.

I pray you to make our sincere regards acceptable to Mrs. Lowell, and believe me always

Your affectionate and faithful friend, GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BOSTON, Nov. 30, 1804.

MY DEAR SIR, — I am indebted to you for three letters which are constantly reproaching me for my delays to acknowledge them. I trust much to your knowledge of my indolent habits, which are an overmatch for my sense of many duties, and render my best intentions often inert.

I can truly say I feel more chagrin by sympathy with our friends at Washington than I felt *direct* at the issue of our election. I confess I did not yet expect it, but I was one of the many who condemned the experiment at the time it was proposed; but it was the project of good Federalists, chiefly from the western parts of the State. They believed the measure [1] to be essentially necessary to maintain the popularity of the Federal cause. There could not have been a weaker opinion formed. It is to be remarked, however, that this transaction has not made us bad, but has shown too plainly how bad we are. It has also shown to our opponents how strong they are; and when it is considered that the opinion of power, and still more the knowledge of its being possessed by a party, tends much to its increase, I think it must be allowed that our opponents are stronger in fact than before this trial.

[1] Previous to the election of 1804, the Legislature of Massachusetts, in which the Federalists were predominant, voted to give the choice of electors to the districts instead of retaining it in their own hands. The result was the choice of Jeffersonian electors.

Many good judges are still of opinion that our elections will not be injured in the spring. Nothing can be more uncertain, yet I think it *highly probable* that Governor Strong will be re-elected; and *probably* a majority may be elected of Federal senators, but a majority of Democratic representatives is expected by most men.

I thank you for the paper you enclosed, and shall be always gratified to see the only arms we have left used to punish wicked rulers. *The time will come, however, when this avenue to public opinion will be shut against the truth.* I have grieved for my country till I am convinced of the futility of grief. I consider what I see as the order of nature, and that it is vain to attempt to change it. We may mitigate, but we can no more avert these evils than the cold of winter.

I am truly and respectfully ever yours, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BOSTON, Dec. 24, 1806.

MY DEAR SIR, — I perceive Congress have *suspended* their ridiculous law[1] against trade with England. By suspending instead of repealing the act, it is hoped to hide our folly; but this is impossible. Every man conversant with the subject must be convinced that the system of commercial hostility, if fairly tried, would be infinitely more injurious to us than to England, if it did not produce war; and that it certainly tends so strongly to war that, if persisted in, it would produce it, if other causes in which we have an interest as well as they did not overrule. I think the affected moderation of the British government at this alarming crisis is to be applauded as much as our egregious and absurd vaporing is to be condemned.

Yours faithfully always, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BOSTON, Feb. 10, 1806.

MY DEAR SIR, — Although I have been fully sensible myself of my delinquency, yet *I hoped you would not be;* and at any rate, if it occurred to you, that you would forgive it, as you have always done, and as I must rely you always will, upon the recollection of

[1] This was the Non-importation Act, passed after the admiralty decisions, and suspended on account of the Monroe and Pinkney negotiation.

the inveteracy of my bad habits and the belief that the languor and coldness of my hand shall never reach my heart.

It is impossible so to detach one's self from public affairs as to be uninterested in any measures proposed to guard our country against the evils that assail it. It is not for *us*, however, to indicate the course to be pursued, and perhaps it will be useful to our opponents to be made to feel *their* responsibility. By this time, they see how vain it would be to wrap ourselves up in the fancied security which local separation affords against the arms of the European combatants. We cannot exempt ourselves from the effects of their wars any more than an individual can from the internal commotion of the society of which he is a member.

I have read cursorily the "Baltimore Memorial,"[1] the great book[2] attributed to Mr. Madison, and many other papers, all tending to prove how much we shall lose by the operation of the British principle, "how unsupported it is by precedent, how inconsistent and wavering Great Britain herself has been in maintaining it, &c., &c., with some *little* argument to show its unreasonableness in the abstract." These writings coincide with many honest, preconceived opinions, with many prejudices, with our animosity toward England, with our pride and vanity, and, above all, with our avarice.

Yet a *few* men still say it is impossible to prove the right of a neutral state to interfere and protect by purchase the spoils which one belligerent has won from the other; but, however this may be, it would be worse than useless to say it openly. Possibly, the man would be insulted, who should attempt to show it in any public assembly. Certainly, these papers are to be considered as the argument on one side only, and as advocates the writers are not bound to do otherwise. It must be allowed, I think, that they are the fruits of the laborious researches of many able men, and ought therefore to be supposed to contain the strength and ingenuity of this side of the question. Yet surely there is much that has no close affinity to the question. There is, too, some sophistry in some of the argument, and some false assumption of fact. It is an extraordinary assumption that our trade would be annihilated or nearly

[1] A memorial of the merchants of Baltimore against the British doctrine. See Annals of Congress for 1806-7, p. 824.

[2] This refers to Madison's "Memoir, containing an examination of the British doctrine which subjects to capture a neutral trade not open in time of peace." This pamphlet was in answer to "War in Disguise," an exposition of the arguments on the other side.

so, if confined in war to the *kind and places* of trade accustomed in peace. Even with large deductions for blockades and contraband, the total of *our* trade would commonly be much enlarged and its profits *doubled* by a war between France, Holland, and England. It is certainly a fallacious argument, too, that because Great Britain opens to us her monopolies, therefore she is bound to permit us to accept the invitation of her enemy. Every belligerent permits neutrals to bring to itself supplies of military and naval stores. Does it follow that it must permit them to be carried to an enemy? But yet this argument is used triumphantly.

Laying aside, however, a question not easily settled, I cannot but remark to you that I every day hear the *magnanimous* policy of wise nations invoked to save what remains of the unconquered world. Prussia is execrated as being equally foolish and wicked: her fate is said to depend on that of Austria, yet she acquiesces in her subjugation. Now are we not also disposed to do all the harm we can to those whose safety is necessary for our independence? We are ready to risk every thing for a little longer enjoyment of the spoils which are won by the blood of the hated English, and, while we ought to think of the safety of the empire, we refer every thing to the pence table. I am persuaded we are to be taught in this business as well as governed by events over which we have no control, and therefore indulge very little of that anxiety which once would have disturbed me. So commending you, my country, and all that is dear to me, to a kind Providence,

I remain your sincere and affectionate friend, G. CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BOSTON, Feb. 17, 1806.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have lately read *your gloomy* letter to Ames, and *his desponding* answer. It was a *melancholy* pleasure *to me*, yet it was a pleasure. Would to Heaven all the men whom I esteem thought as correctly! With the single exception of the *degree* of facility with which a French army could conquer England, I subscribe to all your sentiments. Upon that point, too, I confess myself unsatisfied with the British government. They certainly ought to organize a military force at least a hundred thousand strong, in addition to their present regular army; which force should be subject, in every particular, to the law and discipline of

the regular army, except in their time of service. I am not at all surprised to hear that Mr. Adams is among the advocates for the absurd, childish, and truly ridiculous scheme of non-importation, or non-intercourse. I have often heard the father express his full belief that, by one or two short laws in that spirit, we could with ease and certainty ruin the naval power of Great Britain. Great philosophers and men of distinguished talents will be often found the most zealous defenders of the most monstrous follies, — a good lesson for human pride!

There are many men who think, and think justly, that Great Britain has acted wrongly in the *manner* of enforcing her claims as a belligerent, and that she ought in justice to restore the property of all those where fair voyages were shaped according to those rules of evidence and principles she herself had sanctioned. But there are many sensible men who think she might with propriety in this great crisis proscribe all intercourse with her enemy by sea. Whatever may be her motive, she is in the greatest extremity defending the independence of the civilized world; and the necessity of the case would justify her in saying to neutrals, If you will not help us in the battle, you shall not hinder its success under a cover of neutral pretensions.

I take it for granted that every man sees that the projects of Wright, Gregg, Smith, & Co., would, if carried into effect, probably issue in war. Now it is manifest that no considerable party is willing to take that consequence; and the government, — so far is it from contemplating war that it is unwilling to disburse a dollar in preparation. It will go to no expense for any thing but scarecrows. Perhaps this is best.

But what a change of appearances in Europe do we see by the late arrival from Liverpool at New York; and this moment a gentleman whispers to me that another vessel in twenty-eight days is arrived at the same place, from whence we may hear important news to-night. A great defeat, or the death of an emperor or two, may make us forget our disputes and almost our losses.

Yours *semper et fideliter*, G. C.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

MARCH 29, 1806.

MY DEAR SIR, — You are a hard-hearted man to *compel* me to *think*, which is a bad employment, and to write my thoughts, which is a worse.

All our projectors of systems for coercing Great Britain to abandon or materially change her commercial policy have appeared to me to lay down false premises, and many of them to reason absurdly, if those premises were admitted to be true. It is assumed by most of them that our commerce with Great Britain is of more benefit to her than to us, that consequently its interruption would injure her the most. It is expected that the fear of that injury, or the suffering it would cause, would drive her from her purposes, while we should not be moved. It is argued that a country is benefited by a particular branch of foreign trade in the ratio of its exports, or in the ratio of the excess of those exports above the imports in the same trade. It is maintained that a country which sells provisions (the staff of life) and raw materials for the use of manufacturers possesses such a decided advantage over one that sells manufactures only as enables the former to dictate the terms and conditions on which the trade of the two countries shall be carried on. It is contended not only that navigation, or the carrying part, is the most profitable part of commerce, but that this latter will flourish in proportion as the former is confined to the people of our own country. They suppose the navigation laws of Great Britain favorable to direct pecuniary profit, and on this account supported with so much rigor. They seem to think that our trade with those nations to whom we sell much and of whom we buy little is best deserving encouragement, and that the trade with those from whom we buy almost all we want should be discouraged. They suppose, also, that wherever we supply the British wants, no other source is to be found, if ours is stopped. I write with a galloping pen, and could continue as long as my breath would hold without enumerating the data and postulata of these men, *all of which are untrue*, and in many instances the inverse propositions can be proved. We sell to Great Britain annually one-half of all the surplus of our domestic produce. If this produce were manufactures, they would probably, in case of prohibition, find some other market: they would not immediately perish. A little varia-

tion of the labor and skill that wrought them would produce something else of equal value adapted to the taste of domestic or new foreign customers, or, in spite of prohibitory laws, would find those who had been accustomed to them. It was triumphantly declared by Mr. Madison and his adherents that, by refusing to buy British manufactures, we could bring distress on a million or millions of people in Great Britain, and that their discontents would drive the ministry from their places. It was at the same time urged with equal confidence that our commercial power was irresistible, *because we held their bread in our hands*, which we had only to shut and they would starve. This I understood to apply to Europe as well as the West India islands. Now it is undoubtedly true that a sudden stoppage of the West India supply would be an inconvenience, and would produce considerable suffering; but this must be a stoppage of all supplies to that quarter, or Great Britain would certainly have a share of it, either by capture or peaceably by purchasing it at the other islands. It should be remarked here that no great mass of population in any country is dependent for its principal subsistence on imported food. Nature is kind in this, as a thousand other cases, to set bounds to the power of political projectors. The West India island settlements are more dependent than any other; yet, if they once are compelled to raise their own bread by our prohibitions, we should never cease to lament and condemn the folly that produced them. It is within my own recollection when the islands were chiefly fed by the corn of Europe. France never permitted a barrel of flour to be carried to her colonies from any foreign country until the revolution shook her laws. The little she took from us was smuggled; she even supplied the Spaniards with the flour in Cadiz which they transported to the Havana. More recently, the Havana market has been supplied with wheat from the Spanish settlements on the main, which is a very fertile country. Every one knows that maize and other bread can be raised *in the islands* plentifully, and would be, if the profit on sugar, &c., was not greater than on raising bread. Make bread dear in the West Indies, or make it very uncertain, and they will no longer look to you for supplies. In regard to Europe, all the provisions she takes from the United States in a year would hardly amount to five days' subsistence. One shower of rain too much or too little on their crops makes a greater difference. The grain of all kinds consumed in Europe in each year cannot be less than

seven or eight, and in some years nine, hundred millions of bushels. Notwithstanding many embarrassments on the corn trade, it is necessarily distributed with tolerable equality. Now, what a very trifling difference can it make, whether we send them ten millions more or not. The only difference to them is a present convenient supply in those few places, accessible by sea, where the scarcity is pointed out by a high price. But, although the difference *to them* is trifling, yet *to us* it would be a serious loss to have no vent for a surplus of ten millions of dollars' value. Russia and Poland in the north, Sicily and the people of Africa in the south, have been the principal venders of grain, especially wheat. I am persuaded, if to all that is exported from those countries you add all that we export, the total would be less than five per cent (I might say three per cent) of the consumption of Europe. I think, therefore, *we could not starve any nation in Europe, nor feed them if they were starving.* With respect to raw materials, they are more certainly needed than food. I believe, however, we hold nothing of this description of great value but what may be acquired elsewhere, or admits of some substitute that can be acquired. The improvements in chemistry and natural history go hand in hand in multiplying uses of natural substances, and supplying those substances. If ashes become scarce, barilla will be cultivated.

We now sell cotton to the English to the amount of six millions of dollars, and this article, if uninterrupted, may increase to twelve millions in ten years more, as it has at the same rate the last ten years; but, if you choose to interrupt it, Great Britain has it in her power to obtain ample supplies, partly from Dutch Guiana and her own islands, and indefinitely from the East Indies. If the carriage be dear, it will employ her seamen; and this gain of power always satisfies her for a little loss of money. And this leads me to remark that her navigation laws, including her fishery bounties, are, as now understood, bottomed on the principles of national defence as depending on naval strength, and not on the principles of pecuniary profit. Great Britain often pays direct bounties to a greater amount than the whole profit on the fisheries. She also pays indirectly a tax on her internal industry to encourage navigation. All exclusions of foreign freight operate to raise or keep up the freightage of her own ships, but in this she calculates that she maintains her maritime force in the cheapest manner. Being an island, her safety demands she should be always strong at sea;

and, by contributing in various ways to the support of numerous seamen in time of peace, she has them always prepared to fight for her in war. They may be considered as a naval militia, who chiefly subsist themselves in peace; and the deficiency is supplied by the nation, who converts them to a regular military marine in war. How far this sort of policy is demanded by the condition and circumstances of the United States I will not now inquire; but that we ought constantly to keep up a respectable naval force, and be well prepared at all times to enlarge it without delay, no man can doubt who considers what sort of a world we live in, — how prone nations, as well as individuals, are to violate each other's rights, and how vain it is to expect to be spared upon any other ground than that you are not to be attacked with impunity. I observe among the exports to Great Britain three millions' value of tobacco. This article may be raised in many countries as advantageously as in the United States; but its superior fitness for a heavy tax to most other articles has almost everywhere in Europe subjected it to the sole purpose of revenue. It has been therefore imported by sea, and its culture forbidden. Portugal and Spain import from their own colonies vast quantities of an excellent quality, and the former re-exports to a considerable amount the Brazil tobacco. It would be perfectly easy to make the Portuguese and Spaniards our successful competitors in the production of this article. It would be extraordinary if there were to be found among the articles of our commerce any one thing indispensable to Great Britain, and not to be procured elsewhere; but it would not be extraordinary, in our juvenile state, if there are many things indispensable to us which we have exclusively received from her. I read and hear with amazement men insisting that Great Britain would be a greater sufferer than the United States by an interdiction of trade, and that in an experiment on self-denying ordinances she would be the first to yield. Our public documents show that of all our surplus she annually buys half, and of all our foreign supplies she furnishes two-thirds of what we consume. Is it, then, possible any man should doubt that our affairs would be extremely deranged, both private and public? It is not.

But, although this commerce bears so great a proportion to the whole commerce of our country, it bears a small proportion to the whole commerce of Great Britain. All that she buys from us is less than one-sixth of her imports, and all that she sells to us

less than a fifth of her exports. This view of the subject shows that the injury or inconvenience would be at times as great to the United States as to Great Britain. I have no doubt, if the experiment is tried, it will prove so; and that, instead of the button-makers rising in England to expel the ministers, we should see the people of the United States clamoring against the folly of their rulers, and demanding a change of measures.[1]

It is singular that men who expect to distress the British by refusing to buy of them should not perceive that we must also suffer by their refusing to buy of us. I conceive, however, that the idea is totally false (as we apply it) that the seller is most benefited. If our trade with Great Britain were abolished, it would soon be manifest that our solicitude to buy the forbidden goods would be much greater than theirs to sell them; and that, while their prices at home would scarcely vary at all, the articles when brought here would be doubled in price. On the other hand, many of the articles we should wish to sell would fall here so much below their common level in price as to compensate men for sending them at great risk by circuitous routes to the British market, there to be sold at little more than the ordinary rate.

In our trade with Spain and the south of Europe, we sell much more than we buy. There is a loss often by the ships returning *dead* freighted. There is also a loss on the balance of this trade, which must be received in money or bills which are ordinarily of a correspondent value. Thus, when money cannot be extracted from Spain without a loss of five per cent (which was commonly the case formerly), there will be a loss of about five per cent on bills. The same has held true, when the loss on money was twelve or fourteen per cent. Yet, as this trade is one on which we sell more than we buy, and receive the balance in money, it is conceived by many to be the most useful, as far as its amount goes, of any we carry on. In Russia, we sell little or nothing, and buy to a great amount. We go there *dead* freighted, and pay all in cash or rather in bills on London, *better to us than money*, having cost us a considerable premium in Spain or elsewhere; yet who, among those that think no trade so important to the buyer as to the seller, will dare to deny that the trade with Russia since 1783 has been for its amount the most useful trade to the country?

The hemp, iron, and duck brought from Russia have been to our fisheries and navigation like seed to a crop. Had it so hap-

[1] This prophecy was literally fulfilled when the embargo was laid.

pened that the trade of Spain and Russia were united, the time and expenses of a middle passage and other losses would have been avoided. That is, it would have been better if, as in our trade with England, we could have sold and bought at the same places.

I have now given you a general idea of my manner of thinking, but have not answered your question.

I do not perceive any considerable effect that will be produced by Smith's bill, if it should become a law. It aims to open the British ports for articles *not of the United States* in American bottoms; and it enacts, if this is not admitted by the British, that their bottoms shall not bring to us articles *not of their own product or manufacture.* I take it for granted Great Britain will not permanently admit us to import into her dominions in our bottoms any articles not of our own growth or product. According to the bill, therefore, we shall refuse to her the privilege she now enjoys of importing into the United States articles other than those of her own growth, product, and manufacture. The effect of the bill is therefore to be measured by the amount of all the articles *not of her own product* which are brought into the United States in British bottoms. Without recurring to documents, I should think that in war this amount is very trifling indeed, and in peace not very large. If I am correct in this, the only effect of any importance to be expected is to irritate Great Britain by manifesting a spirit of hatred and animosity, and by attempting to intimidate her with the dread of a new enemy, when in truth she has no such enemy to fear; for I am satisfied a war with that nation would be soon too unpopular for the administration to maintain it, or maintain their places. Every nation has an equal right to regulate its own commerce, and we undoubtedly have as good a right to pass a navigation law as Great Britain. Such a measure, therefore, considered in the abstract, is no ground of offence. But, notwithstanding our right is clear to do this, it cannot be concealed that for more than ten years the party now in power have discovered a desire to do all the harm possible to Great Britain, *without provoking her to war.* Jefferson, Madison, Livingston, Monroe, Armstrong, and many others, have published their hostile wishes. Such a measure as the one proposed at this time would indicate more of the inclination to hurt Great Britain than to help ourselves. Should it produce on her part any kind of resentment, we should be bound in honor to retaliate; and a series of crimina-

tions and recriminations would tend strongly to an eventual interdiction of commercial intercourse, and thus cut asunder the tie which binds us together in peace. It cannot escape the notice of British statesmen that we acquiesce without a murmur in regulations of other nations, which we complain of when enforced by Great Britain. The colony monopoly of Spain, Portugal, and France, may be adduced as examples. The two first of these nations maintain in peace an unqualified exclusion of our trade; and France, though she admitted our vessels and thus favored our navigation, yet the conditions of their trade were, on the whole, as unfavorable to our national interest as those of Great Britain. France refused flour, and took fish; but she took the fish under a duty of thirty per cent, which she applied to the encouragement of her own fishermen. She permitted us to take molasses, salt, and French manufactures only in return; but all this was allowed in our own vessels. The British refused fish, but took flour, and allowed almost every article in return except cotton, and on the same terms as if carried to other British colonies; but it must all be carried in British ships. Considering commerce and navigation as one interest, and as subservient to the *producing* interest of the nation, it is evident that, if our clamors against Great Britain were justifiable, they should have been equally loud against France. But I have never been convinced they were just towards either. The right of the Europeans to monopolize respectively their colony trade is established, and it must be left to their own discretion how far to relax it. We are so situated as to trade with them in a manner reciprocally beneficial, and I should not despair of obtaining by negotiations a reasonable portion of it in the course of a few years. But I do not believe in our competency to extort it from France or Great Britain. I deem it unfortunate that questions of this kind should be started at this time, when it must be obvious that any settlement we could make would be liable to be broken up by the great events of the war. It is also mortifying to see this country so ardently contesting with Great Britain these little points, at the moment she is fighting for us as absolutely as for herself, and when it is to be feared, if she fails, her master will be ours.

You see I think it inexpedient to pass this law or any of the foolish resolutions about non-importations and non-intercourse, or other non-sense. If Great Britain cannot keep her ground, we

must treat with France as mistress of the world; and, if Great Britain does maintain her standing, I think much will depend on the temper of Russia in regard to the policy of Great Britain toward neutrals. The lofty tone of Great Britain was well supported at Copenhagen, in 1800; but she availed herself of the first moment to dissolve that formidable confederacy which had been formed in the North. About that time (as I think) Mr. King's spirited note induced the government to temporize, though reluctantly. The peace with Russia soon after was made by a sacrifice of the colonial principle, as it is called. Lord Grenville denounced that part of the Russian treaty; and the new ministers obtained from Russia an explanatory article, restoring back a part of what Lord St. Helens had yielded. Lord Grenville is now in place, and his principles would forbid us to hope for concessions toward neutrals. Mr. Fox, a seditious demagogue out of office, may be high-toned in; but this is uncertain. Mr. Erskine from his known character may be expected to favor moderate measures toward neutrals, and not the less so toward the United States from holding large sums in our funds. On the whole, the new ministry is so made up that they may adopt vigorous measures toward neutrals, if Russia will join; but I think they will temporize, unless that takes place; and I should think it highly proper for our government to know the true state of things between those two powers, before any great measure is executed.

I hope Mr. Lloyd will write to Mr. Quincy by to-morrow's post. Yours truly, and I may now say *obediently*,

G. C.

Cabot to Pickering.

March 31, 1806.

My dear Sir, — I sent you by this day's mail four sheets, which, if your patience were not inexhaustible, you would never wade through. I am tempted to try it a little further by adding another, though I hardly think I shall have supplied one *material* fact or thought which you did not possess before. It is not a point settled in my mind how far the navigation of the United States will be favored by the laws and steady policy of the country, if it should ever have a system worthy of that name. Nothing has yet occurred to bring principles, opinions, and party influences to a proper test. It has indeed been believed, and the belief propa-

gated by the "New York Evening Post," that our imposition of forty-four cents on foreign tonnage, and an augmentation of duties on goods imported in foreign bottoms, have occasioned that immense increase of American shipping which has taken place since 1791. Now, I am of opinion that this monstrous increase of navigation and trade may be attributed to the wars of Europe; and this is so easily proved, that it is needless to state the facts or the argument.

In a time of peace, I am sensible the foreign extra duties would be sensibly felt; and, until such a time, we can hardly conjecture what measures, if any, will be adopted to counteract them by those nations who will then feel their effects. Should foreign nations, however, retaliate in any manner that embarrasses commerce and depresses the value of our native productions, I should apprehend great discontents among the landholders and cultivators. We are accustomed to consider the interest of navigation and the interest of merchants as the interest of commerce. But is this correct? Is it not true that the tide of commerce would swell the highest, if all the world were perfectly free to contribute to the stream, and that the fullest, freest, and fairest competition in commerce would give to our producers the highest prices and supply them at the lowest? But, while this would best suit the planter, it would certainly lessen the profits of our ship-owners and our merchants. These are *theoretical* truths, not to be despised, and not to be too implicitly trusted. Practical men know that, in a country of such ardent commercial enterprise as the United States, many articles have a value which would be worthless among an indolent or even a phlegmatic people. Our merchants seek continually new markets for whatever our country can produce. This gives an impulse, and often a direction, to industry more advantageous than it could otherwise receive. Hence I infer that the landed interest of our country would be well compensated for any apparent partial sacrifices in support of the commercial and navigating interests. If these latter decline and languish, the demand for our productions for foreign markets would be less in amount and less constant, and our producers would feel the loss. Should the force of these arguments be admitted, it still remains doubtful *how far* the principle ought to operate to exclude foreign competitors. It is not to be imagined that we can engross our whole trade with other nations. If all parties are equally strenuous and equally persevering, we

might conclude that one-half, or nearly that proportion, might finally remain to each. For whatever claim of *right* is set up by one party may be set up by the other with equal reason. Admitting, however, that from the peculiar circumstances of some nations, and the character of others, we could monopolize the trade between this and other countries, there is, I think, one argument against it, which the agricultural States may urge with plausibility. They may say that a war, if it should happen, would be doubly distressing by cutting off at once all demand for their exports; whereas, if foreigners were employed to carry a part, the evil would be lessened in that proportion. I have never had much confidence in the success of our plans to help commerce by prohibitory laws. I believe we could secure more by negotiation than in any other way, and only resorting to prohibitory laws in the last resort in cases of some magnitude, and of manifest unreasonableness in the other parts.

Yours, G. C.

CHAPTER X.

1807–1814.

The British Orders in Council. — The French Decrees. — The Embargo. — Mr. Cabot takes part in the Elections of 1808. — Is chosen a Member of the Council. — Death of Ames. — Publication of Ames's Works. — Mr. Cabot undertakes to edit Ames's Letters. — Views as to Charges of "British Faction" and of Design to dissolve the Union. — Death of Mr. Cabot's Eldest Son, Charles. — Views in regard to War of 1812. — Correspondence.

AFTER the decisions of the British Admiralty Courts, difficulties rapidly thickened round the United States. The retaliatory non-importation act, discussed at length in the letters just given, served only as a useless irritant, and effected nothing. An effort to negotiate with England, however, accompanied and made a part of this ill-advised measure; and William Pinkney was sent to London as joint commissioner with Mr. Monroe. The news that their negotiation was proceeding successfully induced Congress, in the autumn of 1806, to agree to a suspension of the non-importation act. But these promising appearances were soon clouded. The battle of Trafalgar left England supreme upon the ocean, and Bonaparte was compelled to fight his one unconquered foe with other than naval forces. Then it was that, flushed with victories and master of continental Europe, he issued from the field of Jena the famous Berlin decree, by which all commerce and intercourse with Great Britain were interdicted to the whole world. England was not slow to retaliate by orders in council of similar nature. From the attitude of France, it seemed to Mr. Cabot impossible to longer preserve the semblance even of neutrality, and the policy he now desired to see adopted was one of definite alliance with England. By such a course, our commerce, where we alone were vulner-

able, would have been protected; and, aloof from the attacks of Bonaparte's armies, we might by an attitude of open hostility have wrung from France a secure and lasting peace. When the European conflict was at an end, we should have been in a position to treat, at least, as advantageously with England as at a moment when her one thought was to crush at all hazards the power of France. By such a policy, too, we should have made ourselves a valuable ally to one party, an undesirable enemy to the other, and our friendship would have become an object which both the great powers would have sought either to acquire or retain. On such grounds as these, Mr. Cabot favored an alliance with Great Britain; and such a course, whatever its abstract merits, would have been at least well defined, strong, and intelligible. With such feelings as to the general policy proper to be pursued, Mr. Cabot very strongly desired the ratification of the treaty negotiated by Monroe and Pinkney, and hoped that in this way an escape from the most pressing dangers would be secured. Not only were these hopes in regard to the treaty destined to disappointment, but the disgraceful affair of the "Chesapeake" seemed to render vain any expectation of peace. Mr. Cabot still thought, however, that, if Great Britain offered suitable reparation for the attack on the "Chesapeake," it was our duty to accept the reparation and renew the negotiations. He therefore deprecated all attempts to inflame further an already strongly excited public feeling, for he believed that unbridled anger and indignation tended to make peace with England impossible, and to encourage the administration in wild and mistaken measures. His fears were not unfounded. A proclamation ordering British men-of-war to leave our coasts, a demand for reparation so linked with the old grievance of impressment as to make even discussion difficult, and the famous embargo, — these were the measures by which Jefferson hoped to overawe the great powers of Europe, and to carry our young nation safely through the greatest of external dangers.

So weak and wrong was the embargo policy that it at once gave new life to the almost defunct Federalist party. It fell so heavily upon New England, that Mr. Cabot wrote to Pickering, favoring war even as less deadly in its effects on our commercial prosperity and national well-being than the embargo. So strong, however, was the righteous public indignation at the insult offered to our flag by England, that the disposition was very general to accept any and every means of retaliation, even if it took the form of commercial restrictions. But the prominent Federalists in Massachusetts rallied at once against the embargo, and the newspapers teemed with their attacks upon the policy of the administration. These essays, written with great vigor by some of the ablest Federalist leaders, were not without effect, but other causes contributed much more to produce a change of public sentiment. The mismanaged negotiations had broken down, there was no indication that the embargo was merely temporary, as had been at first supposed, and the new year (1808) brought the alarming tidings of a royal proclamation ordering a more strenuous enforcement of the right of search for British deserters. This was followed by an insolent letter from Mr. Canning, declining to renew negotiations on the old basis, after what he considered the wayward and uncertain course of our administration. Mr. Cabot still believed that sufficient reparation had been offered by England for the "Chesapeake" affair,[1] and that the refusal of our government to accept that reparation, and to then proceed to treat fairly and honestly, was a ruinous and dangerous policy. Still more did he oppose Jefferson's plan of consultation with the Senate as to the foreign policy, a method of procedure which he had always consistently resisted. He dreaded a war more than any thing else, not from a fear of the evils which all wars bring, but because he felt that war with England meant submission to France; and he was convinced that both Jefferson and

[1] As Mr. Madison afterwards accepted this reparation from Mr. Foster, in 1811, it may be supposed that he and his cabinet, also, thought it sufficient.

Madison purposely avoided an honorable peace with the former, not only from a belief that their popularity was best sustained in this way, but also from a desire to serve and maintain the interests of the latter.

In the mean time, the opposition to the embargo increased rapidly in New England. The annihilation of the shipping interest threw multitudes of men out of work, and the people turned to the opponents of the administration measures for guidance. Colonel Pickering threw himself eagerly into the conflict, and addressed a letter to Governor Sullivan, setting forth with considerable ability and great vigor the grounds of the Federalist opposition. To insure publication, Colonel Pickering transmitted a copy to Mr. Cabot; and, on the refusal of Sullivan to communicate the letter to the Legislature, Mr. Cabot sent the copy in his possession to the printers, and superintended its publication. This pamphlet was widely read, and produced a great sensation; and Colonel Pickering, then the most prominent Federalist in public life, assumed as far as possible the conduct of the party. Mr. Cabot was most anxious in regard to the line of policy which should at this time be adopted. What he especially feared was the revival of the old cry of "British faction;" and, understanding Colonel Pickering's extreme views, he dreaded lest such a course should be taken as to justify, in appearance at least, this fatal accusation. He therefore wrote to Colonel Pickering with perfect frankness, urging him most strongly to avoid every thing either in speech or action which could justify their enemies in calling them a "British faction." Mr. Cabot saw clearly that hostility to the embargo and the other administration measures was at this time likely to awaken the latent suspicion of friendship to England. He felt now, as keenly as in 1799, the injustice of the charge; for he himself regarded England only as our best bulwark against France, and he believed this to be the sentiment of his party. But, in the critical state of our

affairs, he foresaw that any rash or heated advocacy of what were then unpopular views would present an appearance of sympathy with Great Britain, not as the foe of France, but as our own ancient and inveterate enemy. In all this miserable turmoil of foreign politics, Mr. Cabot's greatest anxiety was always for the independence, honor, and welfare of his country. The policy which he supported he believed to be the one best adapted to serve the nation; but he knew that any word or deed which could fairly call forth the odious accusation of being a foreign faction would be fatal to his party, its policy and its adherents. Conscious of his own innocence in regard to any subservience to foreign interests, he was well aware that the slightest false step might lead to all the dangers which a charge of that nature could produce; and for this reason he was most earnest in his warnings to Colonel Pickering, as to the line of policy that should be pursued. As far as he was able, he restrained his friend, who, always ready for the fray, and now flushed with battle and with the success of his first assault, seemed ready to become an avowed partisan of England. Very fortunately, he intrusted to Mr. Cabot's care and discretion a variety of letters and essays with which he proposed to continue his warfare against Democrats generally, and against those in particular who resided in Massachusetts. But Colonel Pickering's exertions were in this instance in some measure frustrated; for Mr. Cabot quietly suppressed, or, in his own words, "laid in his bureau," several diatribes which his friend launched from Washington on the heads of their foes in New England.[1]

The great public excitement caused by the operation of the embargo, and the consequent renewal of political activity on the part of the Federalists, drew Mr. Cabot from the life of retirement and leisure to which he was so much

[1] Among others which never saw the light is a long letter for publication, addressed to Mr. Cabot at a later period, revealing the "baseness" of Madison in his negotiations with the British ambassador.

attached. He not only lent the assistance of his pen and of his advice to his party, but he even consented to the use of his name as a candidate for office. The tide of opposition, however, had not yet begun to run with sufficient force to give victory to the Federalists in the State elections of 1808. Sullivan was re-elected governor; but Mr. Cabot, though his party suffered defeat, was individually successful, being chosen a member of the governor's council.[1] Averse as he was to all forms of public service, this position must have been peculiarly irksome as well as repugnant to his retiring and indolent disposition; but the records of the council show that he was as faithful in the performance of the duties entailed by this comparatively small office as of those which fell to his lot when a senator of the United States. There is no break in the evidence of his constant attendance at all the meetings of the council, or of his attention to all the various matters of business, great and small, with which he was called upon to deal. The usual labors of the council were moreover, in the years 1808–9, increased by the death of Governor Sullivan before the expiration of his official term. Mr. Cabot served but for one year; and he doubtless took advantage of the rising fortunes of his party to free himself from what he considered a sacrifice of his own comfort and convenience, and which he made only from an unwillingness to refuse aid to his friends at a critical period.

Soon after his election as councillor, Mr. Cabot met with a severe loss in the death of Fisher Ames, his most intimate and trusted personal friend. It affected him deeply, and made his distaste for politics keener, if possible, than before. He had long expected this misfortune. The failing health of his friend had given but too ample and certain

[1] The governor's council were at that period chosen by the Legislature, where the Federalists were in a majority. It is to the credit of all concerned that Governor Sullivan was able to say that he had less controversy with his Federalist councillors than with those of the preceding years, who were of his own party. See Amory's Life of Sullivan, II. 307.

warning of the approaching end, yet the shock was none the less hard to bear when it came. By the death of Mr. Ames, ties of the closest friendship and affection, and habits of the most cherished and constant intercourse, were broken. There was no one, outside of his immediate family, whose loss would have been so severe a blow, or the deprivation of whose society would have been so sorely felt.

To Mr. Cabot's care were intrusted all Mr. Ames's papers and letters; and under his superintendence a volume of political essays and speeches, for which he wrote the preface, was prepared, and issued from the press. To Mr. Cabot also was confided the task of assorting and preparing for publication a selection of his friend's private letters, but this work seems never to have been carried further than the collection and arrangement of the correspondence.

While still a member of the council, oppressed with sorrow for the death of his friend, and burdened with the sad duties it entailed, Mr. Cabot was also compelled to take some share in the party struggle, now additionally embittered by the approaching Presidential election. He was consulted in regard to the proposed plan of a union with the Clintonians; but, from the brief note on this subject,[1] his opinions as to the advisability of such a step cannot be accurately determined. During the progress of the campaign, the cry was raised, and justified in some measure by the unguarded language of extreme men, that the Federalists aimed at a dissolution of the Union. Mr. Cabot, believing, as in 1804, that such a step was unnecessary as well as useless and impracticable, and conceiving the accusation to be wholly unfounded, urged on Colonel Pickering the necessity of a clear and prompt public denial by the leaders of any intentions to bring about a separation. His advice on this point was, it would seem, unheeded; and no effort appears to have been made to refute the charge. His opinions as to separatist schemes, at this time, appear very clearly in a letter which he wrote to Colonel Pickering in

[1] See below, p. 397.

the spring of 1809. Colonel Pickering apparently desired either the town or the State to accept a proposition from a French engineer to fortify the port of Boston. Mr. Cabot replied that such a notion would not be tolerated, and suggested to Colonel Pickering that to fortify the ports was the duty of the national government, which therefore was the proper quarter for such an application.

In all these questions, Mr. Cabot was guided by the views which he took of the general policy of the administration. He considered the embargo to be in the interests of France; and he deemed the threats of war as intended only to maintain the embargo, for he utterly discredited the idea that the administration had any serious intention of fighting. He also felt that the dread of war was universal and strong among the people, and that it was therefore the manifest policy of the Federalists to confine their attacks to the embargo, and force the administration into a position where the latter would be compelled to make peace. To such a policy any violent action or threats of separation would of course have been fatal.

After the period of political excitement in 1808 and 1809, and the success of the Federalists in forcing a repeal of the embargo, Mr. Cabot's letters almost entirely cease. Other causes than the temporary advantage of his party produced this cessation of correspondence. Mr. Cabot had hardly recovered from the sorrow caused by the death of his friend Fisher Ames, when he was called upon to bear the severest trial he ever had to endure. Early in 1811, his eldest son Charles, an able and successful man, died of consumption at Havana, in the thirty-first year of his age. So heavy a blow to his hopes and affections caused Mr. Cabot to withdraw completely from all outside and public affairs, and, although in time he recovered from the loss, he never again resumed his correspondence, nor, with one exception, took any active part in politics. Always inclined to take a dark view of the political future and to regard

passing events with a gentle cynicism, this severe domestic affliction seems to have confirmed him in his desire for perfect retirement and privacy, and to have strengthened the natural despondency of his disposition.

The war of 1812 he regarded as an unmixed misfortune. He speaks of it at the outset as unjust and wicked, and announces his determination to refrain from aiding, in any way, its prosecution. But, with the single exception of the one expressing these sentiments, there are no letters or papers left which give any clew to his political opinions, until the period of the Hartford Convention, in 1814.

Cabot to Pickering.

Boston, Feb. 14, 1807.

My dear Sir, — I think precisely as you do of Mr. Ames's "Alarming Prospect" and some other of his late writings. They should *now* be free from party feelings. I have told him so, and he has profited a little by it. You and some others of my friends have given me credit for an agency in these writings; but I have no other merit than that of thinking in almost every particular exactly as the writer does.

In the midst of the gloom which the destroying power of France has produced on the minds of reflecting men, I find there are some who cherish a hope that the late decree[1] of Buonaparte may be *so executed* as to drive us from the fatal ground on which alone we are willing to remain. They think, too, the British treaty[2] favors the same expectation. I see distinctly the tendency of both measures, but I confess my apprehensions that we are to be purified only *as by fire*. I felt solemnly affected by the quotation you made in the close of your letter, and would gladly partake of the consolation you suggest, — a consolation which I honestly believe in your own heart is at its proper home. I speak this without flattery.

Although Great Britain is depressed and in danger of being discouraged, yet I am perfectly satisfied that, if she were supported

[1] The Berlin decree of Nov. 21, 1806. See above, p. 364.

[2] That negotiated by Pinkney and Monroe. See above, p. 365.

by this country, feeble and parsimonious as we are, nothing need be feared from France, with all continental Europe at her disposal. Great Britain and the United States could keep the sea in defiance of all their power; and such parts of the commercial intercourse as should be kept up by force, by stealth, by connivance, or by consent, would be enjoyed necessarily by the two nations, besides which they would possess almost exclusively the maritime commerce of the other three-quarters of the world and their own with each other. To do this, they must act in earnest, as those who struggle for life; but, if they would act in such a manner, I have no doubt their empire of the sea would be complete, and that the means of sustaining it might be in part derived from the enemy. Both ships and men would probably be procured by victories more than sufficient to repair the waste. The people of all the northern nations, when captured, might be used, and so might some few of the southern. But I am persuaded we prefer the risk of French domination to the efforts which would be required to resist it.

Yours truly, G. C.

Cabot to Pickering.

April 14, 1807.

My dear Sir,—The enclosed paper derives a peculiar importance from the condition of Europe and our relations to it. Nothing can be clearer to my mind than the expediency of a ratification, as favorable to our political safety and commercial advantage; yet a consideration of the circumstances of those who guide our affairs forbids every sanguine hope that they will do what would be best. I think prudence requires a concealment of what we know on this subject, at least until we have had time to deliberate. My own opinion is that the influential Democrats in the different States ought, if possible, to be excited to urge the ratification. I am informed that our ridiculous non-importation law operated unfavorably on the negotiation,[1] and that, if we should vapor about its effects, the gasconade will probably be resented. If you should communicate to Mr. Thorndike the information[2] enclosed, let him be enjoined to secrecy. Yours always, G. C.

[1] This was correct. The British ministers objected to negotiating with the non-importation act still in force, because it would produce the appearance of treating under coercion. Monroe and Pinkney had great difficulty in overcoming this objection.

[2] I am at a loss to know the nature of the information here referred to. No other letter exists which throws any light on the subject of this one.

Cabot to Pickering.

Boston, Dec. 31, 1807.

My dear Sir, — In spite of my indolence, I sit down to write you a short letter, because you command it and have rights which I cannot dispute. Most of us are as much surprised as you are at Mr. Jefferson's hardihood. I believe, however, he still does not mean to go to war, although every step he takes leads to it. I rely a little on this opinion from recollecting how much popularity he has gained by his professions of peace and parsimony, but much more from the consideration that the effects of a British war will probably be so distressing as to render odious those who *unnecessarily* produce it; and certainly, if Mr. Rose [1] acts his part properly, he will put us in the wrong, if we refuse to be conciliated. If he is commissioned, as I suppose he must be, to disavow as an unauthorized act the attack on the "Chesapeake," notwithstanding the previous provocation and subsequent hostility of the United States, and to offer reparation for *the balance of wrong* which is fairly due (and it would not be much), I should think a rejection of his overtures would be too dangerous for Mr. Jefferson. If, however, I am wrong in this conjecture, it is completely within the power of the British government to beat us at our own game. They who exclusively possess the empire of the sea must be consulted by us whenever we go there (to sea) again; and if we abstain a few months without foreign war to employ our men, our minds, and our passions, *the people will run mad.* Already the evils of the embargo begin to be felt, and threats of violence are whispered. No man can doubt that all our commercial cities will experience that degree of suffering which must destroy order and subordination. Some thousands (including women and children) of persons in this town will be without subsistence in a few days, because there is no employment for them. If the government cuts off all the business we are pursuing, they ought to provide a substitute without delay. The embargo brings greater *immediate* distress on us than war, though the latter would *finally* bring ruin. This abominable measure is adopted by Mr. Jefferson, as I think, to avoid a dilemma into which the French were pushing him. The French decree, accompanied with verbal declarations, being made known to him, he perceived he must either warn the people of our

[1] The British minister.

dangers, or by concealing them be convicted of wilful and criminal neglect of duty, by which immense losses were incurred. He escaped from this situation by the embargo, which renders notice less necessary, and hides from the country what, if disclosed, would have excited resistance to France, and favored accommodation with England. I have given you my speculation, and wish you to say to Mr. Quincy [1] and Mr. Livermore [2] that I acknowledge myself greatly indebted to them for their letters, but am unable to pay.

Yours always in truth, G. C.

Cabot to Pickering.

Boston, Jan. 20, 1808.

My dear Sir, — I am oppressed by the debts with which you have loaded me, and can *never* get free. Before this reaches you, our governor's [3] speech will show you that no great good is to come from him; for, although he dares not praise the embargo, yet he has taken from some of Jefferson's parasites the hint to attack the Boston writers. The truth is those writers are not to be answered, and therefore must be silenced by threats or popular clamor; but the attempt evidently fails. A few weak and credulous people may be duped by the ridiculous stories of our writings having an influence on the British government; but men of sense know better. We saw our country inflamed by false statements, and have corrected them by proving the exact truth. We read much false reasoning concerning national rights, and we exposed it. Our country was urged to take up arms upon an exaggerated view of our power to injure the proposed enemy, and we have shown the folly and extravagance of the expectation of success.

The answer of the House, I think, will please you, as it now stands; but it would have satisfied you better, if it had remained as it at first passed, without the words "royal proclamation." The answer of the Senate is waiting for some Democratic members who are absent. I fear it will be bad; but, if it should, there will be some very able harangues from Otis and Gore, which will be serviceable to the Democratic members of the House, many of whom

[1] Josiah Quincy, then member of Congress from Massachusetts.

[2] Edward St. Loe Livermore, member of Congress from Essex County, Massachusetts, from 1806–12.

[3] James Sullivan.

will attend. It is hoped the discussion will deter the House from attempting to address Jefferson; but, on the whole, we incline to think the pressure of the embargo will be more operative in disaffecting the people from war than any thing that can be said or done. If you have seen all our newspapers, you see how much Mr. Lowell has done; and you must be gratified to see how well supported by authorities, by the practice of nations, and by sound reason, the Boston opinions have been. I trust you will approve the forbearance to animadvert on the strange and unaccountable conduct of some who are intrusted with our greater interests. It would be very easy, but it is not expedient, to point out extreme absurdity. Our people are not tumultuous yet; but there is no doubt that discontent has already seized a large portion, and will extend to all the people, against the embargo. I can truly say I do not know a man of any party who openly vindicates it, though there may be some apologists who would palliate and excuse it. In sixty or ninety days, we shall be in a very unhappy state, if it continues. Yours ever in truth, G. C.

Cabot to Pickering.

Jan. 28, 1808.

My dear Sir, — At the moment I was expressing to you my hopes that the popular discontent with the embargo would deter our General Court from approving it, a motion to approve was under consideration. It has been twice postponed, but will probably pass to-day. The truth is no man likes the embargo, and nineteen in twenty detest it; yet party hatred is stronger, and will dictate the declaration of what you will read in the newspaper after another post. We are told of a secret session of the Senate of the United States, which to me augurs no good. In such a body, I should expect a swaggering spirit which disdains prudence, when called to declare what reparation is sufficient to heal a wound which has been exaggerated so much as that we have received. I *fear* Mr. Jefferson is employing you to do worse than he would dare to do alone. Although there is a precedent in Washington's administration, which I well remember, yet it is and always was contrary to my opinion to consult the Senate before the negotiation with a foreign state. I have often speculated on the possible demands and compliances of the parties in the present case, but with little satisfaction. I see no insuperable obstacle to an engage-

ment of Mr. Rose that the *two Americans*[1] shall be restored, on the principle of the British proclamation, which fairly implies that native citizens may be required and are bound to return. He may engage that Berkeley shall be recalled and not serve on this station, or he may engage that his conduct shall be inquired into by a competent court. But he cannot engage that he shall be punished, for no court of any just nation would punish in such a case. He may, however, be recalled, and disqualified from serving in these seas, as a minister is recalled from a particular court to which he is obnoxious, on account of the very acts which fidelity to his own State have required. In relation to us, this may be a concession, while the officer may be consistently remunerated by his own country with new offices and honors. But, at any rate, considering the mission of Mr. Rose on such an errand is itself the essential reparation, which consists in acknowledgment more than any thing else, I hope the Hotspurs will not plunge us into a war with Great Britain, which would destroy every thing good in our country, — institutions, property, and men, and almost hope itself.

Mr. Joseph Story,[2] of Salem, goes to Washington as solicitor for the Georgia claimants. Though he is a man whom the Democrats support, I have seldom if ever met with one of sounder mind on the principal points of national policy. He is well worthy the civil attention of the most respectable Federalists; and I wish you to be so good as to say so to our friend Mr. Quincy, and such other gentlemen as you think will be likely to pay him some attention.

Yours faithfully, *though lazily*, G. C.

Cabot to Pickering.

Feb. 10, 1808.

My dear Sir, — You see with pain that our Legislature have conducted worse than was expected. Undoubtedly, the votes were given reluctantly, for the people in general are known to disprove the embargo; and, although no violences are immediately apprehended, yet no man believes we can bear the measure long with tranquillity. The truth is, a little more time is required to show effects and produce turbulences. I have long since despaired of accommodation with Great Britain, and for *some days* have apprehended that even the reparation offered for the supposed wrong,

[1] The *two American* seamen taken from the "Chesapeake."

[2] Afterwards associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

in the affair of the "Chesapeake," would be refused on some pretence or another. There are reasons enough for these opinions in the minds of all attentive observers of the character and past conduct of Jefferson and Madison. Admitting that they see the danger to which we are exposed from the power of France, and our helplessness in case of the fall of England, yet they see an indissoluble connection between their party power here and their *foreign* politics. I really feel ashamed when I recollect how much you do to inform and gratify me on whatever is interesting, while I am almost too lazy to express *in words* my sense of it.

Yours affectionately always, G. C.

Cabot to Pickering.

Feb. 17, 1808.

My dear Sir, — . . . I have for some time despaired of our public affairs, yet the slightest ground serves to build a new hope upon. Your mentioning the opinions of two leading Democrats, at a moment when we hear by way of New York, a day or two later, that Mr. Jefferson declared his expectation of a settlement with Mr. Rose, revives a little my exhausted expectations. If the negotiation continues to this day, you must have the French decree[1] of December 17, which I should think would cause many men to blush, if not to change their conduct.

Yours sincerely, G. C.

Cabot to Pickering.

Feb. 24, 1808.

My dear Sir, — We are more tranquil here than it was expected we should be under the embargo; but the constant hope

[1] On the 11th of November, 1808, England had issued orders in council, retaliating the Berlin decree. By these orders, all neutral trade with France was forbidden except through Great Britain. No imports or exports were to be made to or from the ports of France or of her allies, except with a British license; and neutral vessels, which had sailed before the publication of these orders, were to be ordered by British cruisers into English ports. Possession of French "certificates of origin" was held a sufficient ground for capture. Bonaparte replied to this by publishing, December 17, the Milan decree referred to in the letter. By this decree, that of Berlin was extended and strengthened. All vessels were pronounced "denationalized" and "forfeited," which should submit to British search, or to any tax, duty, or license from England. All vessels, also, were forfeited, which should attempt to trade to or from any of the ports of Great Britain or her allies. Spain and Holland followed Bonaparte's lead with hasty servility, and at once issued similar decrees.

that it will not continue long, and the real difficulties which would attend several branches of trade if our ports were open, silence complaint. It is evident, too, that, with all the clamors for vengeance and war upon the English, the community are very happy to hear of any thing that seems to promise peace. The policy of the government appears to be pretty well understood in some particulars. They do not wish for a war with France, at any rate. They are not willing to make war on the English, which they fear the people would disapprove. They will avoid, as far as possible without rupture, fair accommodation of differences.

Yours truly always, G. C.

Cabot to Pickering.

Thursday, March 3, 1808.

My dear Sir, — By the mail due on Tuesday, I received yesterday morning three letters from you, consisting of a copy of your excellent communication to the governor, a single sheet dated the 20th, and a single page of the 21st of February to me. A packet franked by you, and superscribed to Governor Sullivan, was at the same time in the post-office; but nothing has been yet heard of it in the Legislature, and it is doubtful whether it will be withheld or sent with some accompanying observations to counteract its effect. I fear our malady is too inveterate to be cured; but it is impossible your letter should be read throughout New England, without producing great benefit. Indeed, if it could be read in the House of Representatives here by one who would do justice to the composition, it would for a moment electrify the members. It is decided to wait as long as decorum requires for a communication through the medium of the Legislature, after which the press will give it to the people in a pamphlet. Among the many valuable truths you have stated with perspicuity and force, I was glad to see the position that our trade would be greater now, if the embargo were removed, than we should have in profound peace, when every nation monopolizes its own according to the ancient usage. After a little more time shall have brought home to individuals the evils of the embargo, there will be but little diversity of opinion about their reality and weight.

Yours truly always, George Cabot.

Cabot to Pickering.

March 9, 1808.

My dear Sir, — This day will issue from the press a copy of your letter to the governor, which he dared not to communicate. Five thousand copies will be struck in a pamphlet form, and it will be reprinted in the newspapers. Probably, you will receive a pamphlet with this letter. This excellent address is well calculated to rouse us from our apathy; and, if we were fit for any thing but slavery, all New England might be brought to act with effect.

Mr. Williams sent you a newspaper writing of Ames's, which would naturally lead you to think he must be better. The fact is otherwise. Mr. Gore, who saw him a few days since, reports very unfavorably of him; and this opinion is confirmed by others.

Improbis vituperari laudari est. You will doubtless have a little of this praise. I trust you will neither be vain nor angry.

I am ever, with sincere esteem and regard,

Yours truly, G. C.

Pickering to Cabot.

(*Confidential.*)

Washington, March 10, 1808.

My dear Sir, — Last evening I received a letter from Governor Sullivan, dated the 3d, of which I now enclose you a copy, together with a copy of my answer, forwarded in this day's mail. This evening I expect a letter from you relative to my long letter of February 16 to the governor, of which I sent a copy to you on the 21st. Your answer will direct me how to steer my course. If I do not get a letter from you this evening, then I contemplate sending you a packet to-morrow, containing the original of my long letter to Sullivan, to be laid before the Legislature, if in session, and provided you shall not have already published it from the copy. I am, &c. T. P.

Pickering to Cabot.

(*Confidential.*)

City of Washington, March 11, 1808.

Dear Sir, — On the 21st of February, I forwarded to you a copy of my long letter of the 16th to Governor Sullivan. If to

know the truth in our public affairs (as far as it was discoverable) were an object deserving attention, I had a right to expect he would communicate my letter to the Legislature. He has refused to do it, as you will see by the enclosed, as well as by my letter to you of yesterday. Knowing the force of party policy, I was in some measure prepared for such a result, though I had not contemplated a *return* of my letter, much less a *rude* return. As it was my intention and the earnest wish of my Massachusetts friends here to have the letter, in one way or another, communicated to the *people* as well as to the *Legislature*, I sent you the copy, leaving it to your "discretion" to give or not to give it publicity, as you and the friends you should consult should think best for the public good. Seeing the course the affair has taken, it may be fortunate if my letter to the governor shall have remained in your pocket. For then the original, now addressed to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House, under cover to Mr. Otis, may be communicated to the two Houses, if in session. But should they have adjourned, or if the copy has not been published, then the publication of the whole correspondence may be advantageously made. The order of publication would be: 1st, my letter dated the — to Mr. Otis; 2d, my letter dated the — to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House; 3d, Governor Sullivan's letter to me, of the 3d instant; 4th, my answer of the 9th; lastly, my long letter to the governor, of February 16.

If my letter of February 16 shall have been already published, then the original now again forwarded cannot be presented to the two Houses. At least, it would seem to me indecorous.

In this case, Hillhouse suggests the following course: That my letter to Mr. Otis, and the one to the President and Speaker of the two Houses, *should have* BLANKS *left for the day of their date;* then if the Legislature have adjourned, or if not, then as soon as they do adjourn, those blanks should be filled with a date about seven or eight days prior to their adjournment, or the usual number of days that a letter is in passing from Washington to Boston; then, that the whole correspondence should be published in the order I have before suggested; the prior publication of the long letter being understood to have been made from a *copy* sent to a friend. If you should think proper to adopt this course of proceedings (and I commit it wholly to *your own bosom*), then, at the proper time, after inserting the *suitable dates* in the letters to Otis

and to the President and Speaker, you can seal and present the packet to Mr. Otis. But perhaps a simpler mode may be better. If the letter of February 16 shall have been published already, then, without troubling Mr. Otis or the President and Speaker of the two Houses (if found yet in session), it may be useful to publish the governor's letter to me of the 3d instant, and my answer. But something seems necessary to rouse the people from the lethargy which appears to have seized the public mind. I am sorry, my dear sir, to impose on you so much trouble. I am constrained to do it from the impression we feel here that the proposed publication may be useful. But you who are on the spot can better decide the question, and therefore I beg leave again to commit the whole affair to your discretion. Yet, if any *doubt* arise on the expediency of *publishing*, may not the consideration that the governor and his friends may misrepresent the affair, not only prejudicially to me, but to the Federal cause, which is the cause of our country, *demand* its publication?

Need I assure YOU that I have no *personal* wishes about this business? I trust not. Let the question be decided solely and absolutely as the public good shall appear to require.

I am, &c. T. P.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BOSTON, March 12, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR, — Your letter of the 2d confirms all my opinions of the bad state of public affairs, and prepares us to hear in a short time of the departure of Mr. Rose. It would be a great gratification to see this gentleman in this part of the country, but perhaps his departure will have a salutary influence. When it is once *decided* that the object of his mission is unattainable, it will naturally augment our fears of actual war.

In the event of Mr. Rose's failure, it becomes a most interesting inquiry, what steps Great Britain will take, and what course pursue in relation to us. On this we daily speculate with infinite anxiety, yet we always arrive at the conclusion *that she will take no new steps, adopt no new measures* that are offensive, but leave us to the effects of our own policy.

In the tremendous contest in which Great Britain is engaged, she has the strongest motives for rescuing or preserving from the

grasp of France every state that can be saved. This her policy is as obviously wise as it is invariable. Our country, ill organized as it appears, with all its ports, people, and resources, would be a powerful auxiliary to France; but to England, as an ally, it might be inestimable. Great Britain and the United States, united in a common cause of defence, would be an overmatch for all the powers on the globe, separated as we are from the strongest of them, and complete mistress as Great Britain already is of the ocean. We could command in every sea, direct and dictate the course of maritime commerce everywhere, and make it nourish and maintain the protecting power. This would make us both safe against the master of continental Europe, until his immense force shall break or be dissipated by a new state of things. The aid we could give in various ways to England, and the steady support to commerce and manufactures we should necessarily yield, would render the two countries, if allied for defence, invincible and almost invulnerable. We are not indeed authorized to expect soon to see this desirable consummation; but, when we see how strongly it is dictated by a sense of safety as well as interest, it ought not to be despaired of. But if at present our jealousies, prejudices, or even worse causes, prevent us from acting on the most correct principles; if we will not help those whose success involves our own safety, it is of infinite importance that we be kept from joining the common enemy. If Great Britain should indulge her resentments in acts of avowed hostility, the first blow would destroy all hope, and almost all possibility of our escape from the hands of France. They (France) would of course monopolize all our means in war and our commerce in a subsequent peace, if this blessing can revisit us while the two rival powers of the world remain. Great Britain necessarily considers the nature of our government, and the composition and condition of our population. Regarding these, as she certainly must desire to do, in all her measures, I am persuaded she will think it wise not only to forbear to strike, but will refrain from injuring or irritating us as far as her honor and substantial interest will permit. Our sufferings by a war would be of no service to England, but would rivet us more strongly, closely, and lastingly to her deadly foe.

Knowing that *we* shall not make war and *believing* that Great Britain will not force it upon us, I apprehend she will execute fairly the system she has lately promulgated, leaving our govern-

ment in the ridiculous attitude they have chosen, until a better sense of our true interest shall induce them, or the force of public opinion compel them, to change it. But, further than this, I should imagine Great Britain would deem it proper to unfold to the eyes of the two nations all such parts of the history of the controversy as would be consistent with decorum to disclose. She would detail the evidence of her constant readiness to remove all *just* ground of complaint. She would exhibit a fair defence of her maritime rights and pretensions, and show from the perilous state of the world the necessity of her adherence to them. The claim to search for her sailors on board *merchant* vessels should be justified on principle, and its actual practice vindicated by the pressure of her own wants of her own men. The allegation that it infringes the rights of neutrals, and is an indignity to their sovereignty, should be repelled by a reference to the search for enemy, — persons as well as property, — which is admitted; and at the same time the informal arrangements which have been offered on this point should be demonstrated to be all that safety and honor permit to be offered, and to be such as ought to have been accepted. The shifts and evasions by which our administration have eluded an accommodation should be exposed, and the real inability of the United States to bear the privations and self-denials they have voluntarily and systematically become subject to, as the chosen means of coercing Great Britain; and the superior advantages Great Britain possesses for that sort of contest, if she would resort to it, might be proved. The conduct of the American government might also be placed in a light that would justify hostile measures; but it should be insisted on that Great Britain has no vindictive feelings towards the United States to gratify, and that she will not be wanting in any reasonable measures to keep from them the miseries and perhaps ruin which a war with her might entail upon them. It might be intimated that the late proceedings of the American government *appear* so entirely without any adequate motives, and so contrary to the true and obvious interests of the country, that it is impossible not to suspect them of being produced by that fear and influence of France which has overwhelmed the cabinets of other states, where independence is now no more. It might be declared that, if all the sacrifices of wealth, comfort, and conveniences which we are voluntarily making are to be continued until Great Britain yield her just rights, they will not speedily terminate, since those

will necessarily be supported with her life; and on this the language of deliberate firmness should be employed, to dispel the delusions that may exist. Finally, it should be stated that, while an honorable accommodation is offered, with sincere wishes that a just regard to the mutual welfare of both countries may prevent a rupture, the pacific disposition and amicable intentions must not be misconstrued, and the partiality of the American government to her enemy must be kept within bounds.

Among the wise and good of every nation, Great Britain has many friends. It cannot be otherwise. But, strictly speaking, *there is no British party here.* Yet such a term is affixed as an opprobrium to the names of many of the best of our citizens. *Great care ought to be taken therefore, at all times, to furnish no materials for this villanous method of destroying the influence of good men.*[1] A nation that has exhibited to the world so much of every thing to admire and esteem, so much of all that ennobles human society, and above all that singularly felicitous combination of liberty and law, — that *justice* which has made her enviably great, — such a nation, if known to inhabit another planet, would be interesting to every man who heard of their existence and character.

I think, my dear sir, something like the ideas I have expressed will occur to British statesmen; and that, after Mr. Rose's return, some official communication of them through parliament, or some other channel, will be made. I hope they will be displayed with the skill and ability with which they easily can treat such subjects, if they should think it necessary. The temper should be mild, the manner conciliatory, while *the purpose may be firm, and avowed to be so.* Such a manifesto would produce good effects on both sides of the Atlantic. Here it would promote the inclination for peace and good understanding. In the mean time, whatever may be the views of a few particular and ever public men, our people will not be driven into a war with Great Britain, if she, by moderation, justice, and prudence, furnishes no pretence, no new means of inflaming the popular passions against her. I repeat then that, in my opinion, Great Britain will do all she consistently can to avoid war, because the advantage of it would be trifling to her, if any at all, and the evils would be great to both countries. To her, they would be lasting; to us, intolerable and probably irreparable. If

[1] All italics here and elsewhere are in the original manuscripts.

our government wants the wisdom or the virtue to shun this terrible mischief, it is incumbent on Great Britain to practise both. This is her interest, though in a much lower degree than ours. It would defeat the designs of France, and could keep this country in a *salvable state* for happier days, which may come soon, and probably will come before the end of the present conflict. The inconvenience of our present measures is slight and temporary to Great Britain, and in part believed by some a substantial good; and, if let alone, would be discontinued by us from choice.

You see, my dear sir, with what freedom I give you my thoughts, without much order or method. They are, however, the result of much reflection, and agree with those of my best friends, whose hearts like my own are warm with the love of our country and oppressed with anxiety for its fate. With unfeigned regard and respect, I remain your affectionate friend, GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BOSTON, March 15, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR, — I wrote you a tedious letter on the 12th, containing a rough sketch of my opinions of the course of conduct towards this country which Great Britain would be likely to pursue. I expressed those opinions with confidence, because it seemed to me such a course is so obviously wise. I am sensible, however, there are many difficulties in the way, and that our government may even make more still. Yet the *true policy of the British administration will be to foil every attempt* to provoke them to put this country into the hands of France. It will not be easy for British pride to brook our foolish insolence in non-importation laws, or other prohibitions, restrictive or discriminative, between them and other nations, which are intended to injure them; yet it is completely in their power to retaliate (or perhaps only threaten to retaliate) every measure of that sort in a manner unexceptionable and yet efficacious. Our angry passions are subsiding, our fears are serious of rupture, and our irresistible passion for commerce will be listened to. Indeed, it ought to be; for no country in the world, perhaps, would suffer more from its abolition.

When you see Governor Sullivan's letter in the newspaper, you will feel more of contempt than any other passion. Some of your friends here think you will answer him with some severity. I think

the perfect correctness of making the communication through him, the only topic; and on this not much need be said, because no man doubts it. The inference that he has grossly violated his duty is sufficiently obvious, not to need being much insisted on.

Yours truly, G. C.

P. S. Your letter is read with avidity, and gives great satisfaction. Fifty thousand persons in New England will have read it before this month expires.[1]

PICKERING TO CABOT.

WASHINGTON, March 16, 1808.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — This evening I received your letter of the 9th, and, in a blank cover, a correct copy of my letter to Governor Sullivan, in a neatly printed pamphlet. With your approbation, and the approbation of others whom I respect, esteem, and love, I could be well content, and would cheerfully dispense with the other kind of praise you mention; but you rightly judge, it will make me "neither vain nor angry" *improbis vituperari*, — you will recollect I had anticipated. And here you will allow me to repeat what is often present to my mind, having heard it quoted, times without number, by my father, "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you." It is added, "for so did their fathers to the false prophets." Truth, then (and our own experience gives confirmation), is the very subject of evil-speaking.

[1] This letter and the preceding one were sent by Colonel Pickering to Mr. Rose, the British minister, together with the following letter from Colonel Pickering himself: —

PICKERING TO GEORGE HENRY ROSE.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, March 22, 1808.

DEAR SIR, — Last evening I gave you a letter from George Cabot, Esq., of Boston, one of my early friends, and one of the best of men, and as enlightened as he is good. Ten or twelve years ago, he was a senator in Congress from Massachusetts. But though eminently well informed in political and commercial subjects, yet always averse to public life, he retired to resume the quiet enjoyment of the pleasures of his domestic circle and of a select society of friends, and of the studious leisure of a contemplative mind. You will read his letter again and with fresh interest, and I pray you to consider it as the result, on its subject, of whatever there is of political wisdom and real patriotism in Massachusetts; for the best and most enlightened men in that State are his friends and associates.

On my return to my lodgings, I found another letter from Mr. Cabot, which came by the last evening's mail, and as it is on the same subject I send it to you for the same purpose as the former.

To-morrow or next day, you will receive my letters of the 10th and 11th, with several enclosures; among which, my friends here think the governor's letter of the 3d and my answer of the 9th may be published with some effect.

For a few days, I have heard nothing of the negotiation.[1] I can only say that Mr. Rose is still here.

For some time past, I have feared that I should never see Mr. Ames again. Your letter confirms my fears. "Quis desideriis sit pudor aut modus tam cari capitis."

The morning after I received his admirable "newspaper writing" which you mention, I was going to send it to Mr. Rose, when I found Mr. Stedman was doing it. Mr. Rose appears to be a very amiable man, so amiable and so candid that, on so short an acquaintance, I cannot think of him but as a *friend*. Some time ago I wrote to you, expressing my ideas of the true policy of the British government to be observed toward the United States, wishing to have them confirmed by yours. Mr. King's I have received. He says, "I entirely agree in your opinion concerning the immense importance to England as well as to America that the relations of peace between them should be cherished and preserved," &c. I have enclosed his letter to Mr. Rose, for I had told Mr. King it was for that purpose I wanted his opinion. It was chiefly that he might in person learn on this subject, and on the common interests of the two countries, the sentiments of our wisest statesmen and best citizens, that I have more than once advised and urged Mr. Rose to travel hence as far as Boston, if the circumstances of his mission should render it possible. His own dispositions are all we could wish, and I have no doubt of his transmitting his impressions to his government.

MARCH 17.

I have just given Mr. Ames's communication to a member of the House, to hand to the editor of the Washington "Federalist," and to urge him to print it. It is time that the silly notions of those who direct and mouth and vote our national measures should be attacked and subverted. Even the herd (who, as Tracy used to say, have begun to walk on their hind legs) may understand (if they read) the most material parts.

Always truly yours, T. PICKERING.

[1] This refers to Mr. Rose's fruitless negotiation with Jefferson.

Cabot to Pickering.

Boston, March 18, 1808.

My dear Sir, — Last evening and this morning I received your three packets relating to the *Sullivanian* controversy.[1] I regret extremely that you could not know what was done here, which would have saved much of your labor. But it was impossible you should suspect the governor's *fatuity* to be so great as to publish his own truly ridiculous letter. After this, I should not be surprised to see him publish your answer on Monday next in the "Chronicle." I shall wait until that day is past before I decide on the publication from the copy you have sent me. There will be some of our own party who will not approve it, but they are very few. The mass of them admire it, and I am satisfied it has a good effect on both parties, and will help us more than any publication we have had.

Our Legislature having risen and the publication having been made, it will not be necessary to call on Mr. Otis. I was a few days since at Dedham. Our friend is very low in health, so that I shall not be surprised if he sinks entirely in a few months. My hope that he will not rests on the remembrance that he rose last year from a similar depression. He spoke of you with very great approbation and friendship; admires your letter, and thinks much good will come out of it. Sincerely yours, G. C.

Since my *long* letter to you of the 12th, we have had short arrivals from England here; and I am much struck, indeed much gratified, to see the coincidence of the opinions of the British administration with those I had expressed as likely to be entertained by them.

Cabot to Pickering.

March 20, 1808.

My dear Sir, — Yours of the 13th is this moment received, and gives me much pleasure; for the general complexion of it is pleasing, although no positive good is specified.

You will in turn be gratified to know that you are read with advantage through all New England. Some favorable changes in the elections of our town officers in various places have taken place,

[1] See Pickering's letter of March 11, to which this is an answer, given above, p. 380.

and *some hope* is indulged that our State elections may be such as to give to the *wise and good* a power of deciding what Presidential candidate shall have the votes of Massachusetts. On this head, however, it is *best* for us to say as little and do as much as we can. If Mr. Rose is not gone, he will doubtless observe these changes, which may have a great effect on our foreign policy: indeed, "*mutability*" is inscribed on whatever pertains to our government.

I do not know that it is necessary to remind you that in these evil days we must be circumspect in all that we say, and still more in what we write, concerning our relations to foreign powers. The most patriotic and honorable intentions would be perverted by unprincipled men, and their authors persecuted, if they were known. What I wrote you is precisely what I maintain often in conversation; yet, in the shape you have it, I would rather it should not be seen.

I have not yet decided to publish your reply to the governor. One or two friends desire it much, and another with myself thinks it doubtful, and at any rate it may be delayed a few days. When things go well, all experiments are to be avoided. I shall observe your direction, "to forget you and think of the public."

Yours faithfully, G. C.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

APRIL 2, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR. — Your answer to Sullivan has been very generally approved in a high degree, and stimulated anew the public inclination to read the public letter.

In spite of all my *vis inertiæ*, I am forced to work much more than I like. You draw and others drive me into the vortex of politics, which I wish to shun. You can hardly imagine how active we are to secure the election, of which sanguine hopes are now entertained by most of the good men.

I am a little surprised at the comprehensiveness of Jefferson's declaration in his message concerning the communication of our affairs with France. If there is nothing really alarming or insolent in the official correspondence, whence does he learn that France menaced us with captures, confiscation, &c., which I am persuaded he knows? Did Dr. Bullers, an *un*accredited messenger, bring it?

Mr. Hillhouse's letter will be a valuable auxiliary to yours, and care will be taken to place it before the public as soon as possible after it comes to hand. Yours truly, G. C.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

APRIL 5, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR, — Our newspapers of this date will damp your hopes of our election. We are all disappointed. I received your letter of the 27th ult., with two copies enclosed of other letters, all which gave me great pleasure; and I am satisfied with the use made of mine.[1] Although our people now begin to suffer very much from the embargo, yet it appears that other feelings are stronger, and other passions govern them. The individual wishes things to go better, but he prefers to govern others rather than be ruled by them. When shall we understand fully the nature of democratic theories? When shall we be satisfied that a government *altogether popular* in form tends irresistibly to place in power the levellers of public authority, order, and law? The people will not permit their own passions, their own favorite objects, to be made to give place to the general good. The small voice of reason will be generally drowned in the clamors of vice and folly. But I have no right to vent my discontents to one who from situation must see and feel more than enough of these mortifying truths.

With sincere regard and esteem, I am

Always yours, G. C.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

APRIL 9, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR, — I received your letters of the 28th and 30th, and the printed papers under other covers. Our election of governor will be Democratic, but the majority will be very small; and we still expect the Cumberland senators will one of them be Federal, and perhaps both. In this case, our condition will be better than last year. Whoever views the democratic theory, in the true light, will perceive that the *natural downward* course of our affairs is for the moment obstructed, or changed by accidental causes. I think observing men will be sensible that, if our election had been held two months ago, the Federalists would have been outvoted by many thousands. But though party feelings in a large part of the community must prevail over all others, yet many men are alarmed at the shameful and dangerous conduct of

[1] They had been sent to Mr. Rose, as stated above, in note, p. 387.

the national administration toward foreign powers; and this uneasiness is the principal cause of the *great* Federal vote. Your colleague,[1] however, thinks us all in the wrong, and has written a long letter to persuade the people so. It is now in the press, and will appear on Monday or Tuesday, when I will send you a copy. I am told its chief object is to controvert the sentiments contained in your letter. I think, however, events are daily unfolding which will prove that the policy of peace and good understanding with England as a security against France is truly wise.

Yours sincerely, G. C.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

APRIL 11, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR, — I received yesterday your two letters of the 2d, and a copy of that of Champagny.[2] This having already appeared in the newspaper, I regretted your labor in transcribing it. Upon reading Madison and Rose, I was surprised that the latter had not made a better use of the argument he evidently possessed.

By the mail of this day, I have sent you, under a blank cover, J. Q. Adams's letter.[3] There is a good deal of presumption in it, and a good deal of slang; but, on the whole, considering how apt he is to be violent, I did not find him more so than I had expected. I don't see how it can be *known* that Buonaparte has *not* declared he will have *no* neutrals. His conduct, his decrees, and Champagny's letter, certainly give credibility to the opinions of those who believe *that he has declared so*. The paucity of cases in which

[1] John Quincy Adams.

[2] I take this to refer to a letter from Champagny, the French minister of foreign relations, to our minister at Paris, General Armstrong. This letter, together with one from Erskine, the British minister, to Madison, was transmitted to Congress by the President, April 2, 1808. Erskine's was a simple defence of the British policy towards neutrals. Champagny's was an insulting command that we should at once go to war with England; and the information was added that, in the emperor's opinion, war already existed between Great Britain and the United States. Acting on this view, Champagny said our vessels were to be sequestered until it was seen whether we engaged in war with England, as was our manifest duty. See Waite's State Papers, VI. 209.

[3] This was a "Letter to the Hon. Harrison Gray Otis, on the Present State of our National Affairs; with Remarks upon Mr. Pickering's Letter to the Governor of the Commonwealth."

the European nations have taken their men is surely no argument against the fact of their maintaining such right by asserting it as often as there is opportunity. But I am not going to comment on what I have scarcely read, and from which I turned with disgust. I think, however, that all the answers should be written with perfect temperance and moderation, that men may not forget the reality of our safety from France depends on Great Britain's being able to defend herself. G. C.

Cabot to Pickering.

April 15, 1808.

My dear Sir, — I do not know whether I have acknowledged all your letters in the order they were received. Last evening, a couple of packets with printed enclosures came to hand. Our newspapers begin to attack the letter of your colleague, and will probably persist until all its falsities and fallacies as well as weakness shall be fully exposed.

In the case of *Ratford*,[1] insinuated to be still alive in Pennsylvania, we see a renewal of the wretched attempt to persuade the country that Robbins[2] was a native of Danbury. I have been asked how you would escape from the charge of inconsistency, in having concurred in the resolution on which the non-importation law was bottomed, and now arguing against measures naturally following it, while Great Britain persists in the same conduct. My answer is that, whatever may have been your motives for that concurrence, you are completely justified in your present views of the policy which now ought to be pursued from the general aspect of our foreign relations. But I say distinctly that Great Britain, in the treaty just now rejected, has done her part toward settling amicably and reasonably the principal question, — *that of the colo-*

[1] Ratford, *alias* Wilson, was one of the men taken from the "Chesapeake." He was proved on trial to be a British deserter from the "Halifax" man-of-war, and was hung at Halifax, in Nova Scotia.

[2] Robbins was the assumed name of Thomas Nash, a leader in the mutiny on board the British ship "Hermione," in 1797. Nash escaped to this country, and the British government applied to have him given up. Nash set up as a defence that his name was Jonathan Robbins, and that he was a native of Danbury, Connecticut. This defence broke down. He was given up, and was hanged at Halifax. The cry was raised that President Adams had surrendered an American citizen, and that the proof of Nash's Irish origin and British citizenship was manufactured for the occasion, by our government.

nial trade; and that, she having given this ample proof of her equitable disposition on that point, a measure which might possibly have been once thought expedient to employ against her would now be highly improper. I have been reading Baring's pamphlet, published February 7th at London.[1] It is the best performance on the subject of our disputes with Great Britain, and shows him to be a very well-informed man. Allowance is to be made, however, for anti-ministerialism. I have made a few notes in the margin, which indicate my objections, and shall send the work to you by post. Yours truly, G. C.

Cabot to Pickering.

April 20, 1808.

My dear Sir, — I received last evening your favor of the 12th. As you must be much occupied until the close of the session, I indulge a hope that, with all your incredible industry, you will not finish your letter to Sullivan. My reason is that you will probably think it necessary to take some notice of the violent invective of your colleague, and perhaps it may be done as well in your address to Sullivan as in any way. I think so much of this, that, if it comes to hand, I shall be tempted to lay it under an "embargo" till I hear from or see you. A cutting criticism on Adams's letter as a literary performance will appear in the "Palladium," I am told, on Friday, which shall be transmitted. Many answers to parts of the letter are issuing from the press, and I have reason to believe one or two pamphlets will be written. I cannot go through the labor of expressing my opinions on Mr. Hillhouse's motion; but will the strong man let a weaker bend him? Yours *fideliter*, G. C.

Pickering to Cabot.

City of Washington, April 22, 1808.

My dear Sir, — I am myself frightened, and you will be alarmed, at the length of my third letter to Governor Sullivan.

[1] "On the British Orders in Council." The author was Alexander Baring, son of Sir Francis Baring, and afterwards Lord Ashburton. He had resided many years in this country, and had married a daughter of William Bingham, United States senator from Pennsylvania. Mr. Baring was at this time a Whig in politics, and, of course, an opponent of the Tory administration.

Forty-three pages! I have examined and re-examined in order to discover what more I can dash out, but am now at my *ne plus ultra.* What can be done with it? Is the public mind satiated with addresses? Will even my friends not have patience to read it? Driven to a vindication never before contemplated, I am strongly impressed with the importance of laying it before the public. In regard to Sullivan, ought this just call to scourge him to be let slip? What will be the reflections of himself and his partisans, to the chief of whom he will certainly communicate his letter of March 18, and what their reports among their underlings, if I remain wholly silent on the monstrous charges that letter contains? Ought this opportunity of clearly convicting him of *deliberate falsehood* to be neglected?

Perhaps you may think some variations proper or expedient. Such can without difficulty be made (seeing the letter is to go directly to the printer) in my absence. Congress will doubtless rise the 25th, but it will probably be as late as the 8th or 10th of May before I reach Boston. To postpone its publication till that time would seem to me to lessen its effect. Even now I fear the delay which has taken place may be rather unfavorable. As to *alterations,* — "what you'd have it, make it." I think they cannot be numerous, and consequently not occasion you a great deal of trouble; while I regret that my communications have given you so much.

A bill has passed both Houses, vesting the President with power to suspend the embargo laws, in the event of peace, or a suspension of hostilities in Europe, or of such changes in the orders and decrees of the belligerents respecting neutrals as in the President's opinion will render it safe to renew our foreign commerce. And he may suspend the embargo in whole or in part. I had objected to the words, as opening a door for dangerous partialities. My colleague, by way of reply, as it seemed, and notwithstanding all his anathemas against the British (and he never lets slip an opportunity to vent his hatred at them), said, "If the British orders should be repealed, I would remove the embargo as to England in the teeth of Buonaparte." He continued, "But if France repeal her decrees, and Britain leave hers in force, I am not prepared to say I would remove the embargo in respect to France." What a strange man! But with all this ostensible independence, and impartiality towards the two great belligerents, I do not recollect to

have ever heard from his mouth one reproachful expression of the French or their master. When, pretty early in the session, Monroe's negotiations with Canning about the "Chesapeake" were read in the Senate (confidentially), he said to Mr. Goodrich, "There is now no cause of war with England." Perhaps no one longer extended his *charity* towards Mr. Adams than I, but I have in this session given him up. Bayard lately said to me, "He is completely sold." I do not know, among my Federal friends, one who thinks otherwise.

APRIL 23.

My letter. Its first object, in order, is the exposure of Sullivan; but its most important object is the vindication of my character. The latter, perhaps, should be exclusive of all electioneering views. Take both into consideration, and decide on the most auspicious time for its publication. You will allow me to submit it to your correct judgment.

When I say "its most important object is the vindication of my character," I do not mean as it respects *my individual self*, but in respect to every *public consideration connected with that vindication*, not *excluding*, however, the immediate interests of my *family* and *friends* in having the fairness of that character maintained. Is it not of some importance to have the letter published immediately, on account of the part which touches my colleague? For I cannot write one syllable in reply to this to Mr. Otis, until I return home. For myself, I declare to you that, if all his learning — an ample store — and all his talents could by one act of volition be transferred to me, and I must take with them the single sentiment he uttered on the passing of the first embargo law, all would in my estimation be lighter than a feather. That degrading sentiment would haunt me like a ghost, and never let me rest. I should be ashamed to meet the face of any man who knew me. The publication of that sentiment should refute every thing in his letter which depends on opinion and compunction, — every thing short of incontrovertible facts.[1]

I enclose a copy of Sullivan's, of March 18th.

I am, my dear sir,

Your greatly obliged friend, T. PICKERING.

[1] The sentiment here referred to was contained in Mr. Adams's speech on the first embargo law: "I would not deliberate, I would act," &c. See p. 425.

Cabot to Egbert Benson.

Boston, Aug. 2, 1808.

My dear Sir, — It is proposed to get up a book to commemorate the worth of our excellent friend, Ames. It will be a single volume, and it will be grateful to his friends to see a large subscription of the wise and good. We are not willing that any thing like solicitation should be used, yet it may be proper for you and Mr. Wolcott to suggest to a few opulent friends the expediency of taking a couple of copies each. A number of gentlemen here have taken two and three, and a few have taken five. Will you say to Mr. Wolcott what I have written, and, *after assuring him of all my regard*, accept the remainder yourself?

Yours truly, G. Cabot.

Cabot to Pickering.

Boston, Aug. 10, 1808.

My dear Sir, — I have seen Mr. Barton's letter,[1] addressed to you. There is a correspondence between some gentlemen here and others at Philadelphia on the subject of it; and on Monday next a conference will be held at New York by gentlemen from various quarters, with a view to examine the means and decide the manner of applying them to the great question of the Presidency. The gentlemen from this place are Mr. Otis, Mr. Gore, and Mr. Lloyd. To the first I have shown Mr. Barton's letter, but I believe that all he writes is also known from others.

Yours truly always, G. C.

Cabot to Pickering.

Oct. 5, 1808.

My dear Sir, — I enclose a list of the vessels which have been "permitted" to sail from this port since the embargo laws passed. I have not heard that any of them were captured, though it is possible that some one or two may have been; and my inquiry, which is very limited, may not have ascertained it. You will

[1] This letter is preserved among the Pickering MSS. in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society. It sets forth a plan for forming a junction with Clintonians against Madison, which was to be proposed at a meeting of Federalists about to be held in Pennsylvania.

doubtless be told that five out of six which sailed for France from some of our ports have been captured and condemned, though in ballast. It should be recollected, however, they were obnoxious to the orders of council by attempting to enter the prohibited countries after notice, and no man supposed vessels going to such countries would not be liable. The English have chosen to take the *lex talionis* for a justification of those orders; but, in fact, the ports interdicted were in general so closely and constantly invested by a naval force as to give them all the rights of a blockade, and the capture of five in six of the vessels proves it. The demands of underwriters for insurance against British capture would show how effectual their blockades are known to be by men who are the best judges. Your sincere and faithful friend, G. CABOT.

Since the within writing, I have seen from several quarters letters expressing apprehensions that a disunion of the States is meditated by the Federalists. Some Federalists have been made to believe there was foundation for these insinuations, and the Democrats at the Southward are using this story to deter men from acting with the Federalists. I think, therefore, it will be well to pass some very decided resolution on the importance of maintaining the Union inviolate under every trial, &c.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BOSTON, Nov. 11, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR, — On the other side, you will find a memorandum[1] of the state of our maritime insurance at three principal offices. It may not be accurate in every *little* particular, but is sufficiently so for all purposes of general reasoning. The result you will find to be perfectly coincident with the ideas of the Federalists. It appears that the actual losses are so small, that, if the undetermined risks issue in the same ratio of loss as those which have ended, the profit of the insurers will be very handsome.

But what avails it that our opinions are correct, and those of our opponents absurd? Will they adopt ours? I think not. With the folly, prejudice, and vice of the country on their side, they can do infinite mischief, and entail upon us irremediable evils, and I believe they will. Yours truly always,

GEORGE CABOT.

[1] Note by Mr. Octavius Pickering. [The following facts are given in T. P.'s speech of Nov. 30, 1807. — O. P.]

Cabot to Pickering.

Nov. 23, 1808.

My dear Sir, — After seeing Mr. Canning's masterly letter[1] I do not wonder at the rage of the friends of our administration. They who are disgraced must feel resentment. Nothing has mortified me so much in all our political discussions as to see the facility with which good men have been duped so as to lend their aid to their destroyers. Too many of our merchants have thoughtlessly countenanced opinions and measures which are wrong, and thus have enabled the government to pursue a system which, without such aid, they must have abandoned. It is, however, some satisfaction to observe the amelioration of public opinion here. It is a fact that the declaration of our Legislature against the President's continuing his proclamation was supported by *more hearts than voices;* and I cherish the belief that New England will steadily oppose as unjust and unnecessary a war with Great Britain.

Yours faithfully, G. C.

Cabot to Wolcott.

Boston, Nov. 27, 1808.

My dear Sir, — Mr. Olney informs me of the safe arrival of the engravings, and promises to send them forward by a suitable conveyance. I owe you an acknowledgment of two letters concerning your care of this business,[2] and must trouble you still further when the next parcels come to New York. In all this, however, *I know full well* that I give you pleasure.

As you well remember the course of my opinions on the destiny of our country, you will not be surprised to learn from me now that I consider the government of vice and folly as *inevitable* until the evils they bring shall, by their excess, necessarily bring remedies. But, however all these things may be, believe me always, with unfeigned affection and esteem,

Your friend, and obliged George Cabot.

[1] In reply to Pinkney's proposing a repeal of the orders in council on condition of the repeal of the embargo, see Hildreth, VI. 90–92; also Waite's State Papers, VI. 288.

[2] The publication of Ames's Works.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 1, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have received your letter of the 23d ult. The administration and their friends are indeed enraged at the mortifying situation in which Mr. Canning's letter has placed them. Anderson,[1] of the Senate (whose person, I believe, you must remember), in a petulant but silly speech he made *at me* to-day, had the folly to say, among other things, that Canning was acting the part of Genet, and that he believed his letter was intended to be an appeal from our government to the people! If I had not answered his remarks *instanter*, I should not have infringed the sacred rule, "Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath," his insignificance screening him from one's *indignation*, though he is not below *contempt;* so I thought a few gentle stripes might not be misapplied. On Canning's letter, I had only to observe that it was not, nor ever would be, published by him. It was presented to the American people by their own government.

The supporters of the administration are sick of the embargo, but the ground taken cannot at once be relinquished. An instant repeal would wound their pride; but, conscious of their own baseness, their pride would give way, if their false character for superior wisdom and patriotism would not fall with it.

But they cannot save themselves from perdition. One corner of the curtain which concealed the insincerity, the duplicity, the falsehood of the executive, has been lifted up. It will be raised still higher, and all their deformity be exposed. They must sink. Their partisans will make every possible effort to support them, knowing that they fall with their two leaders. Madison must necessarily be privy to all the impostures practised by the President; and, partaking in the fraud, he must participate in its punishment. The detection comes too late to defeat his election. But assuredly the corrected public sentiment will control his measures; and he may even derive some credit for administering the government properly, though against his will.

Mr. Giles is to make a speech to-morrow on the resolution for repealing the embargo, after which, perhaps, the question may be taken; and though he himself is staggered, and others tremble,

[1] Joseph Anderson, senator from Tennessee.

they will doubtless, at this time, reject it. Perhaps this may be requisite, more effectually to dissolve the spell which has distracted the public mind.

Faithfully and affectionately yours, T. P.

The followers of Jefferson are sufficiently angry with me, and yet (though not aware of it) pay me no small compliment. At the head of all the publications on this side of the water, which induced the British government not to revoke the orders of council, Anderson placed my letter to Sullivan. And a member of the House, of vastly more consequence than Anderson, — Burwell,[1] — told Quincy, just at the opening of the session, that but for my letter the orders would have been revoked! Really, these gentlemen go far beyond you, and in effect call in question your penetration. You saw only that I had done you the honor of making you one of Governor Sullivan's councillors: they have discovered that I direct the councils of the British Empire!

I am, &c., T. P.

Cabot to Pickering.

Boston, Dec. 15, 1808.

My dear Sir, — . . . . It is plain to me that the governing party, after ten years' perseverance in vindicating the abominable conduct of France and criminating the venial conduct of England, are compelled to abandon the defence of the former. But, in doing this, they seize the advantage offered by the *corrupt* state of public opinion, of placing those two nations on the same ground as aggressors. This opinion, while it shall continue, must blast every effort that can be used toward the establishment of a just policy. I know the tide of prejudice is overwhelming you in Congress, and therefore you can do but little for the safety of the nation; yet that little is precious. I have no desire to see any of my friends there attempt to display those great truths which are indispensable for the people to know until the people are better prepared to receive them; but the newspapers may be used with great effect until you stop them *by law*. An examination of the despatches appears in the "Centinel," and is reprinted in the "Repertory," which I think will lay open fairly the scandalous duplicity of our

[1] William A. Burwell, member from Virginia from 1806-21.

government (to use no worse terms), by which we are subject to evils, which, if continued, will burst the bands of society, unless, indeed, Mr. Gallatin means to get rid of the embargo by showing the difficulty of maintaining it. I should infer from his letter, and the general course of our internal affairs, it was intended seriously to arouse the dominant party against the minority, and thus to crush them as a political party, under the pretence of executing the law. My present purpose of writing, however, is not to speculate on the dangerous views of the administration, but to ask of you to read "the Analysis,"[1] and, if you think it useful, to procure its republication in *suitable* places. You will find the work more and more interesting as it advances.

Yours truly always, G. C.

DEC. 15, 1808. P. M.

I had written the enclosed at the council chamber, but was too late for the mail this morning. Since my letter, I have received your EXCELLENT SPEECH.[2] On the topics it treats, you have taken precisely the course I wished. Your modesty may prevent you from doing with it all the good of which it is capable, but sure I am you ought to transmit to sensible good men in various quarters a copy. Here, we shall give it circulation in the newspaper or a pamphlet. I say, then, of you and Lloyd and Hillhouse, you deserve well of your country. So fare you well. G. C.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

BOSTON, Dec. 18, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR, —. . . . I was rejoiced to see your colleague's[3] observation on the futile argument so often urged about starving England by our withholding supplies of grain, when she brews into beer more than we ever sell to her, and almost as much as we can spare to the whole world. This truth displaces a dangerous error, from which we have suffered much. I only regret that it is not possible to dispel other errors still more dangerous. I regret that so many causes have concurred to establish opinions in our country which I think *absolutely false*, and which, while they prevail,

[1] By John Lowell.
[2] On the embargo, delivered November 30 and December 1.
[3] Mr. Lloyd.

are insuperable obstacles to a just and wise national policy. Even good men seem to think it a great point gained that the friends of the administration place the conduct of the two belligerents towards us on the same ground of injustice. Now, if it be true that, with few exceptions and those always fairly healed, Great Britain has habitually treated us with due respect, and that France has generally, and especially the last ten years, violated every obligation toward us, and held us in perfect contempt, how can we take a right position toward those two powers, with the present corrupt state of public opinion? We must think more justly before we can act so; and, if we are incapable of this, we must suffer, and shall suffer bitterly.

Yours truly always, G. C.

CABOT TO WOLCOTT.

BOSTON, Dec. 28, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR, — I perceive with you that, bad as the times are, they are to become worse. I add with the most painful regret that, *in my opinion*, the evils which we suffer, and those which we justly fear, are the natural offspring of our vices, vanity, and folly as a people. I cannot admit that we have an election between the two great belligerents which we shall treat as an enemy. God forbid it! But I pray you not to imagine that, because I entertain these sentiments and think them defensible against the general opinion of the country, I indulge any expectations of seeing them prevail. I have no such hope. My mind has for many years been completely settled that the fate of our country is inevitable, and all that good men can possibly do is only to mitigate in some degree or defer calamities which no human virtue and skill can avert. I am indeed mortified that my friends sometimes compel me to take a *nominal* part in public agency, but I weakly yield to personal solicitation what I should deny to other motives. Forgive me, if these intimations of my political despondency disgust you, assured that I am always sincerely,

With high esteem and regard, your friend and servant,

GEORGE CABOT.

Pickering to Cabot.

City of Washington, Jan. 11, 1809.

Dear Sir, — Yesterday I received in a pamphlet the able analysis of the late correspondence between our administration and Great Britain and France. Some of its numbers I had not before seen. They now appear with a preface, in which is this passage: "The public mind, excited in the highest degree by real distress and more dreadful prospects, has sought in *secondary* causes the source of our public calamities. The arrestation of our commerce, the total annihilation of external as well as internal trade, are *effects*, not *causes*. They are the instruments employed to scourge and afflict us. But the secret and hidden causes of the infliction of this punishment are to be sought elsewhere. *Remove our commercial restraints and our evils are not cured: our malady will only become the more inveterate. Measures will succeed so much more disastrous as to make us look back to our present sufferings and to hail them as blessings.*" I understand the writer to mean *that a removal of the embargo will involve us in a war with Great Britain.* This is the precise sentiment which our administration wish to have impressed on the minds of the people of the United States. Let this impression be made, and the embargo will be in *effect* what it is in *form*, — *permanent*. Now, my dear sir, be assured that this alternative, an *indefinite continuance of the embargo or war with Great Britain*, is a pernicious error. At a distance from the seat of government, indeed, the conduct of the administration, the war speeches of its devoted adherents, and the irritations intended to be excited by the newspapers, alike devoted, certainly tend to produce such an impression. But I beg you to be persuaded that, whatever may be the faith of the mass of these devotees who are not let into the secrets of the cabinet, *the administration will not make war on Great Britain.* The threatening language daily heard is not entitled even to the rank of *gasconade* or *bullying*, because the administration know full well that all such gasconade and bullying have been and will be viewed by Great Britain with utter contempt. But such language is well enough adapted *to impose on the citizens of the United States, by terrifying them with the evils of a war with Great Britain, to induce them quietly and patiently to submit to the evils of the embargo.* You may say (and I know not how to contradict you) that old prejudices and attachments to France, — which,

through all affected disguises, are still visible in those who have brought us into our present disastrous situation, — and their never-dying hatred of England, prompt them to such a war. But, while the people of the United States would manfully encounter every evil incident to a *necessary war*, the administration are not satisfied that the same people, even duped as they long have been by a thousand artifices, will be persuaded that war with Great Britain is at this time unavoidable. The administration surely make some calculation of the expenses of such a war, and know that it could not be carried on without new taxes, which would hazard or render certain their own overthrow, and make way for successors of a different character. They know that, in the actual state of the world, our commerce during a war with Great Britain would be comparatively trifling, and the ordinary revenues not equal to the present necessary expenses of government; and they know that, without adequate funds pledged for the regular payment of the interest and the eventual discharge of the principal of new debts to the vast amount which must be incurred to maintain a war with Great Britain, money could not be borrowed. They know, or ought to know, that the conquest of Canada and Nova Scotia would cost more than they would be worth, and that the conquest of the latter would be impracticable without a naval force far surpassing that we now possess. They know that these conquests, if effected by the expenditure of many millions of dollars, and at the expense of many thousand lives of valuable citizens, could not be maintained without a vast annual expense to support the *armies* which must be stationed in those regions for their defence. Finally, they know — and rely upon it, my dear sir, that, if they think at all, they deeply ponder this — that, if Canada and Nova Scotia were added to the United States, they would add just so much to the population and strength of the northern section of the Union, the power of which, of all things, our present rulers would endeavor to prevent.

Make what use you think proper of this letter. This is not a time to shrink from any responsibility in which the public safety is involved.

I am, &c., T. P.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

JAN. 18, 1809.

MY DEAR SIR, — Your favor of the 11th is this moment received. I presume you know that Mr. Lowell is the writer of the "Analysis," as well as of many other excellent publications here. *We* do not, however, differ from you materially in the views you take of the policy of the administration. It is not believed by us that they *intend* a war with Great Britain, but that, by menacing us with that calamity, they expect to terrify us into acquiescence with their oppressive embargo and its concomitants. We do believe, however, that the administration have only to elect between their own disgrace or the ruin of their country. They would dread the consequences of a British war, which you have described, and therefore they do not contemplate *declaring* it; but they have taken a course which leads to it, if they persist. They know the embargo will not be borne much longer, and they must be prepared with a substitute of a character coincident with their general policy. This policy requires a non-intercourse, with such provisions as, in effect, will be hostile, *unjustifiably hostile*, to Great Britain, and *she will necessarily retaliate*. The present obnoxious measure being removed, the nominal relief would be popular; and yet we should in fact have no trade, and should only be permitted to go upon the ocean to provoke British captures, which our laws will justify her in making, but which will be universally odious in our country. Whether this would be called war or not, its pernicious effects on us would be the same. Our government ought to raise the embargo, and leave commerce free; but this they know would offend France, and therefore they refuse to do it. For the same reason, they will adopt no substitute for the embargo that is not as favorable to the wishes of France as the embargo itself; and there are so many foolish expedients, that would be popular and yet ruinous, that we do truly fear some of them will be adopted. Such is the explanation of the sentiment in the "Analysis."

With my best regards and respects to your colleague [1] and to the "Old Sachem" [2] of the Connecticut tribe, I remain always

Your faithful G. C.

[1] James Lloyd, the successor of J. Q. Adams.

[2] James Hillhouse.

Cabot to Pickering.

Jan. 19, 1809.

My dear Sir, — In a short letter yesterday, I explained in some degree the apparent difference between our friends at Washington and ourselves here. We think precisely alike of the policy of the government, their views, intentions, and tricks; but we think a little differently of the consequences that may be produced. We have therefore thought it wise to alarm our people here with a just dread of those consequences, which are too likely to be realized. We believe it has been useful to direct the public attention to the danger of a British war, that they may the more strongly and steadily resist every substitute for the embargo which shall be calculated to involve us in such a war. We think, too, these discussions operate favorably on all the best part of our community, by compelling them to see that we have no cause of war with that nation, and that, in fact, the want of any color of pretext to enter into such a quarrel is now the most embarrassing circumstance to the administration. We are sensible, at the same time, that in other sections of the country our ideas give more effect to the vile artifices the administration are practising.

Yours faithfully, G. C.

Cabot to Pickering.

Boston, May 9, 1809.

My dear Sir, — I have received your letter of the 1st instant, on the subject of Mr. Du Buc's proposition. Although I have no authority to answer for the town of Boston, and certainly none to answer for the State, yet I am satisfied that, in the present posture of our affairs, neither the one nor the other of these communities would enter into a serious engagement for the fortification of the port. Indeed, every one knows that the national government is intrusted with the care of our national defence, and to that alone ought an application to be made.

I hope you will pardon my delay, when I inform you that I waited for an opportunity to see a paper which was laid before the council last June on military affairs, by the late governor.

I am, with unfeigned regard, always yours,

George Cabot.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

MARCH 28, 1810.

MY DEAR SIR, — A packet franked by Mr. Quincy and a letter covered to Colonel May were received the day before yesterday. The reasoning on the subject of Jackson's [1] dismissal is so forcible and perspicuous that it could not have failed to satisfy *honest* doubts. But the truth is, we are past the period of argument on that topic by about three weeks. Men will scarcely read a paragraph which professes to prove the fallacy or falsehood of the government's pretensions concerning Jackson. This point occupies so much of the letter, and is so interwoven with other parts of it, that I do not hesitate to use the authority with which I am vested to deposit it in my bureau until further order.

With the sincerest regard and esteem, I am ever truly yours,

GEORGE CABOT.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

JUNE 11, 1813.

MY DEAR SIR, — It is absolutely impossible for me to perform the task prescribed in your letter. I have long since expelled from my mind as much as possible every thought on the subject you require me to consider. I perceive there is so much weight in the reasons you suggest for a repeal of the non-intercourse law that it may be expected to take place. The replenishing the treasury by the double duties, and the supplies of some indispensable articles to the enemy, are stronger motives for a repeal than any which now exist for the continuance of that law. If, however, the double duties are faithfully collected (which I doubt), the Eastern and commercial people will be most grievously oppressed; for the consumption of imported articles by these is out of all proportion greater than by the cultivators of the South and West. I hear many persons express a hope that the repeal will not be agreed to, unless the double duties are abolished; and others hope it will be resisted altogether, because they are not willing to raise money by any means to support an unrighteous war. For my own part, I grow more indifferent to any of these measures, believing fully that, since our nation is so wicked and unjust as to enter upon this

[1] Francis James Jackson, British minister at Washington.

war, if it suffers, its sufferings will be salutary. I, therefore, shall obey the laws constitutionally made, but shall conscientiously refrain from every voluntary aid to the war, in thought, word, and deed. With sincere regard and the highest esteem and respect, I am always

Your assured friend, GEORGE CABOT.

CHAPTER XI.

1800-1805.

New England Federalism and the Hartford Convention.

I PROPOSE in the following chapters to give some account of the Hartford Convention, of which Mr. Cabot had the honor to be chosen President. His acceptance of this office was the most momentous action of his life, and I shall therefore endeavor to define with exactness the opinions and intentions which led him to take this step. To do this properly, it becomes necessary not only to relate the history of the Convention itself, but to trace the course of political events which produced such a measure. This, if performed with fulness, would be to write the history of New England Federalism during the first decade and a half of the present century; and a biography offers neither place nor occasion for so extended a work. By a careful exclusion of all irrelevant matter, a brief sketch of New England Federalism and its results may, I think, be presented, and no point essential to a correct understanding of the subject be left untouched. I shall aim to show not merely what the Federalists did, but also what their opinions were; and, to do this successfully, I shall be obliged to trace, as concisely as possible, the general policy of the administration during this period.

Mr. Hildreth and Dr. Von Holst have alone attempted to treat the Hartford Convention and its antecedents historically: all other writers on the subject have been imbued with a spirit of bitter partisanship. I cannot claim

impartiality, nor is it my intention to offer arguments either for or against the Hartford Convention and its members. I shall simply state the facts of the case, and leave the work of deciding the merits of the question to the future historian. I shall in this connection present some facts which are wholly new and drawn from material never before published, and these new facts will of necessity be interwoven with many already familiar.

In enumerating the sources on which we may rely for evidence in regard to the history of the Convention and of the New England Federalists, it is to be much regretted that we cannot count testimony of the best and highest kind. There is no evidence by a disinterested contemporary. Partisan witnesses abound, however; and we are especially fortunate in respect to the opinions of opponents.

We have in great fulness the views of the most extreme hostility as well as those of more temperate opposition. But we are not compelled to trust to the frothy denunciations of the Democratic press for a statement of the case against the New England Federalists. The indictment has been drawn up by one of their former associates with far greater force and elaboration than any member of the Democratic party was capable of exhibiting. In his second reply to the thirteen Boston gentlemen, in 1829, Mr. John Quincy Adams has formulated an accusation against the New England Federalists, pre-eminent both in extent and in force.[1] With all the bitterness of confirmed enmity, and sharpened by the peculiar animosity due to the family nature of the quarrel, Mr. Adams's fierce polemic has con-

[1] This second reply, here referred to, was never published. The republication, in 1828, of the accusations made by Mr. Adams in 1808, drew forth from some quondam Boston Federalist a request for evidence, which Mr. Adams in a long answer declined to give. The thirteen demandants then issued an appeal to the public. These three documents were published. Mr. Adams then prepared this second reply, but did not give it to the world. Through the kindness of Professor Henry Adams, I have been allowed to use this valuable paper.

centrated in one pamphlet all that can be charged against the Federalists. If worse things can be said about them, I have failed to find them; nor do I believe that they exist. Mr. Adams, in common with Colonel Pickering, the chief enemy of his early years, believed conscientiously that no one who differed from him in opinion could be governed in any action of life by aught except the vilest and basest motives. Join such conviction as this to a power of vituperation unequalled except in rare instances even in New England, and we have an accuser who would leave nothing unsaid, and who would not seek to soften any thing that he could say. So well provided with an opponent's views, we are equally fortunate in the other direction. Not only from Mr. Cabot's own letters, but in the fullest measure from the Pickering papers, from those of Governor Strong, and from the deprecating defences of Mr. Harrison Gray Otis, are we enabled to gather the views of the New England Federalists of all shades of opinion. Thus it is possible to know both the best and the worst that can be alleged for or against the Federal leaders. The future may, and very probably will, bring some new materials to light; but it does not seem probable that any thing can be presented to essentially modify or alter the evidence contained in the papers now printed.[1]

The principal points in Mr. Adams's accusations may be resolved into seven heads, which I will enumerate here for the sake of convenience. Mr. Adams charges: —

I. That there was a plot among certain Federalist leaders to dissolve the Union in 1804.

II. That this plot was never abandoned, but was renewed in 1808 and in 1814.

[1] This may appear a bold assertion, but it rests upon a conviction of its truth derived from a long and careful study of the Pickering Papers. Whatever schemes of separation were fomented in New England, Colonel Pickering was the foremost in them. He surpassed all his associates in reckless and daring opposition, and that which he did not know and share in regard to New England Federalism cannot, I think, be vitally essential to its history.

III. That a dissolution of the Union was, as such, the object and wish of certain Federalist leaders.

IV. That these leaders were in communication with Great Britain in 1807–8, and subsequently.

V. That these leaders were a small band of adroit conspirators, residing in Boston, who deceived and misled the people, had no real popular support, represented nobody but themselves, and sought only their own advancement and the gratification of their own ambition.

VI. That the Hartford Convention was the culmination of this conspiracy, and was intended as the preliminary step to the attainment of the object of the conspirators, a dissolution of the Union.

VII. That the Hartford Convention was unconstitutional and treasonable, and was the only instance up to that time of State resistance to the general government, and wholly abnormal, hideous, and wicked.[1]

Before proceeding with a detailed discussion of these points, it seems proper to say a few words as to the origin and principles of the Federalist party, and also to trace their history after their fall from power in 1801 until the first scheme of separation in 1804. The popular notion in regard to Federalism is that to which the name naturally gives rise. By Federalists are commonly understood those men who advocated a union of the States and an efficient Federal government. This conception is true, but is at the same time so limited that it may fairly be called superficial. The name arose from the first object which the friends of the Constitution strove to achieve; but this object, the more perfect union, and even the Constitution itself, were but means to ends of vastly more importance. The ends which the Federalists sought formed the great principles on which the party was founded, and it can be justly said

[1] I have endeavored to sum up fairly the essential accusations made by Mr. Adams. I feel confident that I have not exaggerated them, and I trust I have not weakened them.

that no nobler or better ends were ever striven for by any political party or by any statesmen. The first and paramount object of the Federalists was to build up a nation and to create a national sentiment. For this they sought a more perfect union. Their next object was to give the nation they had called into existence not only a government, but a strong government. To do this, they had not only to devise a model, to draw a constitution, to organize a legislature, executive, and judiciary, but they had to equip the government thus formed with all those adjuncts without which no government can long exist under the conditions of modern civilization. The Federalists had to provide for the debt, devise a financial and foreign policy, organize an army, fortify the ports, found a navy, impose and collect taxes, and put in operation an extensive revenue system. We of the English race—whose creed is that governments and great political systems grow and develop slowly, are the results of climate, soil, race, tradition, and the exigencies of time and place, who wholly disavow the theory that perfect governments spring in a night from the heated brains of Frenchmen or Spaniards—can best appreciate the task with which our ancestors grappled. But even we must stand amazed, if we pause to consider the social and physical circumstances under which this great experiment was made. Thirteen distinct communities, scattered along a vast extent of coast, with no ties to bind them but race, language, and geographical isolation, were to be welded into a compact, harmonious nation. Most of these communities were dispersed over great territories, were agricultural, and were destitute of the commercial and moneyed interests which demand so peremptorily a firm and stable government. Moreover, these communities had always realized in large measure the blessings of little or no government. They were essentially self-governing, and depended solely on their own good sense to maintain peace, order, and justice. Against the mother country, the colonies had risen

in defence of the rights of Englishmen; and after long years of struggle, after bitter intestine broils, they had shaken off the parental yoke. The contest had strengthened the independence and self-reliance of the colonists; but it had also fostered their distrust of all government, and had rudely shaken even the weak local fabrics. What followed could have been readily foreseen. The ill-contrived central government of the Confederation went rapidly to pieces. With no intrinsic strength, it could not resist the popular distrust, jealousy, and contempt. Independence became turbulence; liberty, license; and freedom, anarchy. A revulsion followed, and the Constitution was the result. Amidst natural disadvantages, increased a thousand-fold by the miserable years of the Confederation, Americans sought to build up a nation. Upon a people lately convulsed by civil war, upon a people who had lost their old political habits and traditions without finding new ones in their stead, it was necessary to impose a government, and to create a national sentiment. This the Federalists did, and they need no other eulogy. With no undue national pride, we can justly say that the adoption and support of the Constitution offer an example of the political genius of the Anglo-Saxon race to which history cannot furnish a parallel.

The political party to whose exertions these great results were due was the Federal party. They were the party of order, of good government, and of conservatism. Against them was ranged a majority of their fellow-citizens. But this majority was wild, anarchical, disunited. The only common ground on which they could meet was that of simple opposition. The only name they had was anti-Federalists. They had neither leaders, discipline, objects, nor even a party cry. Before the definite aims and concentrated ability of the Federalists, they fled in helpless disorder, like an unarmed mob before advancing soldiers. But, though dispersed, the anti-Federalists were still in a numerical majority. They needed a leader, organization, and opportu-

nity, and they soon found all three. Thomas Jefferson arrived in New York, not only to enter into Washington's cabinet, and lend the aid of his great talents to the success of the new scheme, but soon also to put himself at the head of the large though demoralized opposition to the administration he had sworn to support. Filled with the wild democratic theories which his susceptible nature had readily imbibed in France, Jefferson soon infused them into the minds of most of his followers. Instead of a vague dislike to any and all government, he substituted a sharp and factious opposition to each and every measure proposed by the friends of the Constitution. To that Constitution he had been strongly opposed,[1] and he endeavored to instil a like distrust into the minds of his followers. Failing in this, with his ready insight into popular wishes, and with his instinctive appreciation of the latent political forces, he changed his position to the more tenable ground of a strict and limited construction. He found the opposition an inert mass, and as far as possible he informed it with his own spirit, the spirit of the French democrat. He found it without objects or principles, and he gave it both. He built up a party creed sentence by sentence, as the Federalists advanced from one measure to another. To bind the States and to strengthen the national sentiment, to make the country respected and prosperous, the genius of Hamilton devised and carried through the financial policy. Jefferson met it by the cry of corruption, monarchy, and repudiation. He denounced the national bank as an engine of despotism. He sneered at the forms with which Washington strove to hedge the dignity of his position. When Washington formulated the two great principles of Federalism, a strong neutrality supported by a sufficient navy, Jefferson, imbued with an insane love of France, led his party into the defence of that nation, and forced our politics to turn on those of Europe. Appreciating the strength of the latent

[1] Jefferson's Works, III. pp. 315–318, 324, 325.

hostility to England, he roused it to frenzy, and strove to divide the nation into a French and English party. From the same motives, he resisted and opposed Jay's treaty; and, when he found himself unable to stay the national indignation against the French, he grasped the terrible weapon of States' rights, and sought to coerce the national government by the doctrine of nullification, by threats of secession, and by the imminence of civil war.[1]

The Federalists had come forward as the champions of order, as the upholders of law, as the defenders of constitutional liberty, and of the rights of property. When they found themselves confronted not by the constitutional opposition which was to have been anticipated, but by what seemed a Gallicized resistance to every thing that was not license, they grew more and more convinced of the imperative need of a strong and energetic government. The extreme ground taken by Jefferson drove the Federalists to believe more and more firmly in the necessity of stringent measures, and in the baneful character of every thing approaching democracy. Yet the vigor and success of their policy never gave them the support of a majority of the people, except at the moment of enthusiasm awakened by the French outrages. Still, they maintained themselves by sheer weight of ability, and for twelve years frustrated the attacks of the opposition. With all his marvellous political skill, with all his unequalled adroitness in the management of men, Jefferson succeeded in drawing over to his views but one man of real ability. Madison left the Federalists; but their ranks remained otherwise intact, and the Democratic majority seemed vain before the united efforts of a party led and officered by nearly all the distinguished men of the nation. But the Federalist party carried within itself the seeds of destruction.

[1] If this seems overdrawn, let any one who is of that opinion read the Kentucky resolutions of 1798, drafted by Jefferson himself, the Virginia resolutions of the same date, which he instigated, and call to mind the fact that Virginian troops were ready in arms to seize then, as they did in 1861, the arsenals of the United States.

To continue successfully the political *tour de force* by which they had obtained their power and established their measures, a perfect harmony was requisite. In a party which found its strength almost solely in the numbers and abilities of its many leaders, union and co-operation rested on most unstable foundations. After the withdrawal of Washington, bitter feuds broke out, and the Federalist party fell, never to rise again. Then was seen the unsubstantial nature of the popular support which had been given to them. In the country, generally, their numbers melted away with a startling rapidity, and even in New England their power began to wane. The reasons for this are not far to seek. The Federalists were not in sympathy with the political forces at work in the country; whereas Jefferson knew these forces by instinct, and directed his course in conformity to them, as surely as the mariner follows the compass. Under no circumstances could the Federalist tenure of power have been much prolonged, yet in the short time allotted to them they had done much. This is neither the place nor the opportunity to rehearse their achievements, nor is it necessary. A party which, in opposition to the popular passions, called a nation into being, and which erected around our constitutional liberties the barriers that kept out the flood of ignorant democracy, then threatening to engulf us, does not need to have their exploits catalogued here. The Federalists could not do as they wished, and prevent our government becoming purely democratic and popular; but they did succeed in modifying democracy, and in rendering it both acceptable and successful. Yet they necessarily left much undone. They had initiated the policy of strong and real neutrality, protected by an efficient navy; but they had not habituated the people to it, nor had the glories of Truxton's victories been sufficient to make men realize that the sea was the field on which our power could be best maintained and asserted. The foreign policy and the navy were, therefore,

the two points on which Jefferson's attacks could and did succeed; and they form the key to nearly all the history of the next twelve years.

To understand and do justice to the unmixed feeling of dread with which the Federalists regarded Jefferson, we must understand not only the peculiar and strong nature of New England Federalism, but also the circumstances of the times, and the character of Jefferson himself, as it appeared by his words and deeds. In New England, Federalism had always found its chief support; and there alone, after the downfall of the party, did it retain any real vitality. This was due, of course, partly to the stubborn and unyielding character of the New England people, but chiefly to the circumstances of their daily lives, to their education, their occupations, and their traditions. The population of New England was of the purest English stock, unmixed with any foreign element. Dependent wholly on their own exertions, the New Englanders were not burdened with the curse of slavery. Settled in towns, and not scattered over a wide extent of territory, their interests and habits were homogeneous and of long standing. The average standard of wealth and education was remarkably high; and they were, moreover, essentially a trading and commercial community. Their social fabric was perfectly crystallized and firm, and their moneyed interests were large, extended, and sensitive. They were naturally, therefore, the friends of order, stability, and strength in the government, and of political conservatism. To the party which represented these principles, they were sure to give an obstinate and unyielding adherence.

All these opinions had been invigorated and confirmed in the minds of the Federalist leaders, by the spectacle presented to them in Europe. Beholding, as we now do, the excesses and results of the French Revolution through the long vista of eighty years, we cannot easily appreciate the almost wild alarm with which its principles were re-

garded at the time by the majority of intelligent men in New England. It is a simple matter for us to estimate the dangers, meaning, and importance of that awful convulsion. Secure in our established national wealth and strength, brought up from our cradles to believe in the Monroe doctrine as the only possible foreign policy for the United States, we smile readily at what seem to us the almost mad fears excited by the French among the New England Federalists. But, if we can for a moment perform that most difficult of all feats, — carry ourselves back in imagination, and stand in the places of our ancestors, — we shall no longer look upon their apprehensions as ill-founded. They had a commerce of enormous value and great extent, scattered over the face of the globe, and at the mercy of the European nations. They had but just freed themselves from England, their nation was still in infancy, and its very existence seemed to depend upon the actions of Europe. Foreign politics had a vital importance then, of which we can now have no conception. And what was the lesson, what the spectacle, that these same foreign politics presented? They had seen one of the great nations of the world torn to pieces by the frenzies of a Parisian mob. They had beheld universal license, atheism, communism, preached by the ephemeral leaders whom these mobs had set up. They had seen every thing which they considered dear and valuable in life trampled in the dust by the French rulers, and this destruction exultingly proclaimed. This was not all. Possibly their fears would not have been justified by this alone; but when they saw the pillage, carnage, and riot of mobs converted into sacred principles, and a crusade in their behalf inaugurated and supported by a whole nation, they shrank from the promoters of such deeds with undisguised horror. The Federalists were the champions of "not rash equality, but equal rights."

. . . "They wished men to be free:"
"As much from mobs as kings, — from you as me."

The liberty for which they had fought the Revolution, and founded the government, was the sober, intelligent, fearless liberty of our English ancestors. But they hated the licentious despotism of a French rabble, even when dressed out in the deceitful mask of "liberty, equality, fraternity." Under the influence of these specious names, they had seen the nations of Europe become, in turn, the allies, the dupes, and the victims of French Republicanism. They had no wish to follow in the same path. Let it not be supposed that these men dreaded the arms of France. They longed to meet her in battle, and prove their native supremacy to any thing of Gallic origin. What they did fear was the subtle infusion of the poison of French principles with all its baneful concomitants, and concluding, at last, in abject dependence on the "great republic." We may call such feelings and beliefs madness or folly now; but, when we do so, we should recall the great men of other lands, who shared in the opinions of the New England Federalists. Edmund Burke was neither knave nor fool, nor the sycophantic Tory which Democrats delighted to paint; yet what Federalist ever equalled or even approached Burke in savage and unmeasured denunciation of France and the French Revolution? William Pitt was neither a coward nor a driveller; but he regarded the principles of the French Revolution with unmixed horror, and, in obedience to a public sentiment which he could not resist, waged a long and doubtful war against them. George Canning was neither dull nor timid; yet he founded the "Anti-Jacobin," to arrest the spread of French doctrines, and to their suppression devoted all his ability. The list might be indefinitely lengthened, but to no good purpose. French principles, as then preached and practised, were regarded with deadly aversion by a large majority of able men everywhere; and the New England Federalists, whether rightly or wrongly it boots not now to inquire, formed no exception to the rule.

Actuated by such feelings, it becomes easy to com-

prehend their bitter political hostility to those who not only brought French principles into vogue, but strove, and with some measure of success, to found a party upon them. Chief among the apostles of the new belief was Thomas Jefferson. He had opposed the Constitution, and denounced it as too energetic; he had raised the hollow, canting cry of "monarchists:" he had defended Shays's rebellion as honorable and patriotic; he wished "the tree of liberty to be watered with the blood of patriots every twenty years;" he desired a rebellion to recur, with regularity, at the same epochs;[1] he had been the advocate of repudiation, and the consistent enemy of the army, the navy, and the treasury; he favored rotation in office; he was a foe to strict neutrality, and an ally of France; and now, under what circumstances it mattered not, he was chosen President of the United States. Perhaps he intended to carry out no one of his views, but he avowed the contrary. Nor is it necessary to say that these were the real views of Jefferson; but they were his declared opinions, and in this character had he chosen to appear. Can we therefore blame the Federalists for regarding him as the enemy of all respectable government, and his accession to power as the precursor of a revolution destined ultimately to reduce the United States to the condition of France?

One thing is certain: the success of Jefferson was a revolution. To the timid character of the leader and, above all, to the good sense of the American people, it is due that this revolution was a peaceable one. The natural political forces which the Federalists had curbed, but which they had tried in vain to crush, were now in the ascendant, and for good or ill our future history was to move on different lines from those which had at first been drawn. The cooler heads in the Federalist party understood the importance and meaning of the change: they knew that it was revolution: and, while they believed it to be inevitable, their just

[1] See note above, p. 416.

anxiety was very great. Nor were the first steps of the new President of such a nature as to allay their fears.

In the midst of the anxiety and excitement produced by the wretched and prolonged intrigue to substitute Burr for Jefferson, some of the Federalist leaders in Washington sought to make terms with the latter, in order to secure from him guarantees that certain fundamental principles should be observed. Strange as it may sound to us, one of the dangers most dreaded by the Federalists was that the accession of Jefferson would be accompanied by a complete reorganization of the civil service in the interest of partisans of the new administration; and there can be little doubt that on this point Jefferson gave satisfactory assurances to the Federalist leaders in Washington, through the medium of Senator Smith of Maryland.[1] The other points on which the Federalists were alarmed were the public debt, commerce, and the navy, which they considered as of vital importance, but to which Jefferson's hostility was notorious and avowed. On these questions, likewise, Jefferson's pledges were satisfactory. How far he violated them will gradually appear as we proceed; but that they were given is undoubted, and, although in itself a matter of no great moment, illustrates the fears of the Federalists, and the extremities to which they believed Jefferson would go. Reference is not made to it here for the sake of charging Jefferson with bad faith subsequently, although such pledges as were given, even if conveyed in a roundabout way, were sufficiently precise, and were looked upon by the parties as binding.

[1] See Hildreth, II. 407; Diary of John Quincy Adams, containing direct testimony of Bayard, I. 428. Davis's Life of Burr, pp. 102–107, contains a full account of this transaction, together with the sworn depositions of Bayard and Smith that the negotiation had occurred, and that Jefferson had acceded to the conditions proposed by the Federalists. That Jefferson made and violated these pledges is now matter of history, although in the "Anas" he denied the existence of any negotiations or pledges of this character. In the same account, Jefferson with his wonted adroitness accuses Bayard of negotiating for Burr with Democratic members, — a statement which called forth the publication of the conclusive testimony of Bayard and Smith given in the Life of Burr.

The Federalists seem to have put confidence in them. Yet Jefferson was the most changeable of men; and to expect him to maintain pledges such as these, or to accuse him of bad faith in violating them, would be little better than charging a man with bad faith for changing his coat. But we gain some notion of the feelings — the honest, if mistaken feelings — with which the Federalists regarded Jefferson, by the pledges they exacted from him. They are just such conditions as men would exact from one whom they deemed the enemy of property, of society, and of vested rights. They are the pledges that would be demanded by men who feared a social and political convulsion, which was precisely what the Federalists did fear. If any one doubt the reasonableness of their terror, let them trace Jefferson's previous course, let them ponder the opinions he had avowed, and consider the views he had expressed, and the objects at which he professed to aim. A word may be fitly said here in regard to the injustice so often charged against the Federalists for concentrating all their hatred upon Jefferson. We only need to read the history of the party which he ruled, to find the explanation and justification of this bitter personal animosity. Jefferson, while at the head of his party, was the party. He had found it demoralized, disorganized, without aims and without principles. He had breathed into it the breath of life, he had given it objects and principles, and he had led it to victory; but he had gathered no leaders into its ranks. Except his immediate successor and his financier, both of whom he kept ever by him, Jefferson allowed no rivals near the throne. By the most consummate management, by unequalled tact, by an unsurpassed power of dealing with men, by these arts, and by these alone, Jefferson established a supremacy to which our history cannot furnish a parallel. Such parliamentary ability as there was in his party, his crushing despotism drove into revolt; but the ringleader[1] found no followers. Like the Etruscan king, Jefferson cut off the heads of all the tall

[1] John Randolph.

poppies, and so devoid of leaders was the compact and devoted majority in Congress, that they could not repel the assaults of the handful of Federalists and of their former ally, John Randolph. So great was the extremity at one time, that Jefferson urged Nicholas to return to Congress, and lead the party.[1] The despotism was an iron one; and even John Quincy Adams, when he came beneath its sway, found himself helpless. Strong, bold, aggressive beyond even the measure of the sternest New England character, Mr. Adams, when he supported Jefferson, was compelled to support him without asking any reasons, and was obliged to advance the measures of the chief — measures which involved the fate of the country — without knowing why or wherefore they were framed.[2] The supple Virginian, who made no speeches and wrote no pamphlets, wielded an unquestioned power as relentlessly as an autocrat of the Russias. He recognized no master but popularity, and a great party bent before him in blind subserviency, while he not only strained the Constitution to the utmost, but, if need were, overstepped its limits.[3] With all the political power in the country centred thus in

[1] Jefferson to Nicholas, V. 4, 48.

[2] Diary of John Quincy Adams, p. 497. See also his remarks on the embargo bill, as given by Colonel Pickering in his letter to Governor Sullivan. I have found among the Pickering MSS. the following memorandum: —

"Mem. at Boston, May 11, 1808. I was informed, that Mr. Adams said my last letter (April 22d) to Sullivan did not exactly recite his words in Senate, the day the embargo bill passed. I reminded Mr. Cabot that, soon after the law passed, I wrote the words. The next day (May 12th) he furnished me with the following extract. My letter to him is dated January 8. 'To save you the trouble of recurring to the letter [I suppose one I might have written to T. Williams], I repeat, what I shall never forget, the expressions used.' 'The President has recommended the measure on his high responsibility. I would not consider, I would not deliberate, but act. Doubtless, the President has further information to authorize the measure!'" In the appendix to the letter to H. G. Otis, ed. 1824, Mr. Adams denies the truth of Colonel Pickering's insinuation, that he wished to resolve the legislature into a mere exponent of the executive will; but he admits that the report of his words was substantially correct. Whatever Mr. Adams's intention, the fact therefore remains that he had to bend beneath Jefferson's sway when he supported his measures.

[3] Jefferson himself considered the acquisition of Louisiana unconstitutional. See IV. of his Works, 500, 501, 504–507.

one man, it is hardly surprising that the Federalists held that man responsible for all the acts of his party, and poured upon his devoted head all the vials of their wrath. If it be also remembered that the Federalists sincerely believed Jefferson to be in reality, as he was in seeming, the embodiment of French democracy, the advocate and promoter of principles which menaced with destruction all the rights and customs which alone made life to them worth having, their feelings may be easily conceived. The Federalists hated Jefferson with no common political hatred, but rather with the vindictiveness of men toward a deadly foe who, as they firmly believed, sought the ruin of all they most prized and cherished. Right or wrong, such were the honest feelings of the New England Federalists toward Jefferson. How far his deeds conduced to an abatement of such opinions, a brief statement of events during his administration, as they appeared to his contemporaries, will readily show.

Jefferson came into power at a moment singularly fortunate for himself. We were at peace with all the world, while at home all the unpopular measures of organizing the government had been carried through by the Federalists. They had laid the taxes which now filled the Treasury; and, under their wise management, the debt had been provided for, and the revenues had grown to large proportions. Jefferson's inaugural address was intended to be conciliatory in tone, and was certainly adroit; but, except when he adopted the Federal policy, there was nothing definite about its loosely worded sentences. It was the first of our public documents where Talleyrand's use of language was adopted, and where the real meaning of the author was hidden under a cloud of words. From this address dates the pernicious practice among our public men of using platitudes to conceal meaning or a lack of meaning, as the case may be. "A policy of wise frugality," unaccompanied by any definite suggestion, was the principal topic of the inaugural.

The reasons for this vagueness are obvious. Jefferson had no definite policy to offer. His pole-star was popular support, his guiding principles were French theories of government. The cabinet, however, promised better than the address. Madison and Gallatin were by far the ablest men among the Democrats, and they filled the highest places. They were neither visionaries nor theorists, and their appointment was productive of confidence. The rest of the cabinet simply showed the lack of ability in the party. The South had no one capable of administering departments, and Jefferson filled up the places with the best Northern men he could get.[1]

But, though Jefferson was now weighted and in some measure sobered by the responsibilities of office, he had no intention of abandoning his favorite theories without a trial. The hungry party sent up a cry for "spoils," and Jefferson at once set about gratifying them, although he did not fail to display his wonted circumspection. First came removals in a number of selected cases, which were not considered to come within his covenant with the Federalists. Then the district attorneys and marshals were changed. Then Jefferson claimed that all appointments made by Mr. Adams after the election had taken place were *ipso facto* void. Persons so appointed Jefferson stigmatized comprehensively as "midnight appointees," and proceeded to dismiss them, and fill their places with his own supporters. These steps called forth much vigorous opposition; but, in the message addressed to Congress in the autumn of 1801, measures far more dangerous, and more in accordance with Jefferson's peculiar views, were broached. Retrenchment was advised, and effected at once in the army and fortifications. The naturalization laws were modified to a mere nullity, and the gates were opened to the flood of emigration which brought fresh supporters to the ad-

[1] Levi Lincoln and Henry Dearborn of Massachusetts, and Robert Smith of Maryland.

ministration in ever increasing numbers. Far worse than this was the repeal of the judiciary act, recommended by the President and carried out by Congress; supplemented by a wholesale attack on any and all judiciary systems by Giles and Randolph of Virginia, the President's faithful and provident followers.

But it was one of the cardinal points of Federalist policy which suffered most. Our policy of neutrality found all its strength in the gradual construction and preservation of an efficient navy. Suggested by Washington, the foundation and support of our naval power had been the chief glory of Mr. Adams's administration.

A report by Mr. Stoddert, dated Jan. 12, 1801,[1] gives a clear idea not only of the state of the navy at that time, but of the Federal policy in regard to it. We find that, inasmuch as the danger of a French war had subsided, the secretary advised the sale of all vessels in the service except thirteen frigates. Materials had been already collected sufficient to build six seventy-fours, and the sites for as many navy-yards had been purchased. After advising the continued collection of materials, the report proceeds, —

"When the United States own twelve ships of seventy-four guns, and double the number of strong frigates, and it is known that they possess the means of increasing them with facility, confidence may be indulged that we may then avoid those wars in which we have no interest, without submitting to be plundered. An annual sum of $117,387 (over and above the appropriation for the six seventy-four gun-ships already authorized) for the purchase of timber to be laid up in docks for seventy-four gun-ships and frigates, and the adoption of efficient arrangements to secure the manufacture of copper, the culture of hemp, and the manufacture of canvas, would in a few years raise us to this desirable state of security."

An estimate was also submitted, which placed the an-

[1] American State Papers, Navy Department.

nual expense of maintaining the present force, thirteen frigates, six in service, seven laid up, at $643,000.

Such was the wise and far-sighted scheme of Washington and Adams. Before Jefferson's policy of a "wise frugality," it fell helpless, and the Tripolitan war alone saved our navy from utter extinction. A constant adhesion to this economical management left us, when the war of 1812 broke out, with five frigates in service, seven brigs and two ships; and to this little navy almost all the glory of that otherwise disastrous war was due. But, in the prosperity of his first term, Jefferson thought only of his theories; and the "Chinese policy" had to be carried out. In his first message, he was able to announce that the marine corps had already been disbanded, that the sites for navy-yards were abandoned, and that all naval preparations had ceased. A prompt reduction of appropriations by Congress completed this triumph of "a wise frugality."

Although he thus withdrew her protection, Jefferson could not injure commerce directly; and in the hands of Gallatin, who pursued the Hamiltonian policy, the finances were safe. But, with characteristic adroitness, Jefferson, while he repealed stamp duties and excises, and removed the tax on spirits, refused to meet the just obligations of the country to the claimants under the French indemnity. All these measures, in appearance the first cautious steps towards a revolution in our system, were passed in Congress by a brute vote; and calls for information by the opposition were voted down in silence.

In April, Jefferson could write to Kosciusko, and detail a long catalogue of accomplished changes. He was able to say: —

"The session of the first Congress convened since Republicanism has recovered its ascendancy, is now drawing to a close. They will pretty completely fulfil all the desires of the people. They have reduced the army and navy to what is barely necessary. They are disarming executive patronage and preponderance, by

putting down one-half the offices of the United States, which are no longer necessary. These economies have enabled them to suppress all internal taxes, and still to make such provision for the payment of their public debt as to discharge that in eighteen years. They have lopped off a parasite limb planted by their predecessors on their judiciary body for party purposes; they are opening the doors of hospitality to fugitives from the oppressions of other countries; and we have suppressed all those public forms and ceremonies which tended to familiarize the public eye to the harbingers of another form of government." [1]

The last clause refers to Jefferson's watchful care for the symbolic as well as the essential. He had not listened in vain to the French doctrine which substitutes names for things, which regards as one prime object of revolution the right to alter the names of Parisian streets, and to scrawl new mottoes on the walls of houses. There was, fortunately, in our country no need to do more than discard the few simple, dignified forms which Washington had adopted as befitting his office. For the imposing speech to Congress, the delivery of a written message, to which no answer was expected, was substituted. But these changes did not suffice; and Jefferson, the high-bred, aristocratic Virginian, therefore laid aside all decency and courtesy in order to prove his Republicanism. To insult the representative of tyranny, and to show his own hatred of that odious crime against humanity, the President of the United States, dressed like a pawnbroker's clerk, so far lowered himself and his office as to receive the minister of England in a manner which a cowboy would have blushed to adopt.[2] Thus all parts of Republicanism as conceived by Jefferson were preserved. Such changes may have been wise, the policy that dictated them may have been just, but it must be allowed that they naturally tended to confirm the fears and suspicions of the Federalists. They had believed the President to be a

[1] Works of Jefferson, IV. 430.
[2] See Quincy's Life of Josiah Quincy, 92, 93.

leveller and revolutionist; and he seemed to them to be acting up to his character, when judged by his own utterances and behavior, and by the measures of an obedient Congress. Nor were they encouraged by the inauguration of the new system of electioneering. Gallatin's report, in May, 1802, was the first of those miserable documents, which, emanating from a great department of the government, served only as a cover for partisan attack. To this open assault by the Secretary of the Treasury, Wolcott replied for the Federalists with great force and effect.[1]

Meantime, removals from office went on slowly but steadily; and the Federal newspapers and public meetings began to attack the President on this point with bitterness and persistence.[2] Though Jefferson had carried resistance to the alien and sedition laws to the very verge of secession, he was too absolute a party chief to permit newspaper assaults which he deemed injurious, or in cases where he could reach the offender. The notorious Callender, convicted under the alien and sedition law, had just emerged from prison. His faithful, if somewhat dirty services seemed to entitle him to a reward; but Jefferson refused him office, and gave him only fifty dollars. Callender thereupon accused Jefferson of assisting him in the preparation and publication of the "Prospect before us," the scandalous pamphlet whose authorship had caused Callender to languish so many months in a "Federal dungeon." Jefferson denied the charge in print,[3] and promised to publish all the correspondence between himself and Callender, although characteristically enough he soon after said that he could not find the letters. Callender, however, was more careful of his papers: he not only found all Jef-

[1] "Address as to the Faithful Expenditures of Money drawn from the Treasury," by Oliver Wolcott, 1802.

[2] See above, p. 320.

[3] Jefferson's Works, IV. 444–446.

ferson's letters, but he immediately printed them. It then appeared that Jefferson not only had furnished money and information, and revised the proofs for the seditious libel, "The Prospect before us,"[1] but that he had afterwards been betrayed into an unguarded denial of this action. Callender, his revenge still unsated, then proceeded to narrate a series of disagreeable and scandalous little incidents connected with Jefferson's early amours. The same hound that had yelped at the heels of Hamilton was now baying at his own, and Jefferson seems to have been as irritated and displeased as was his great rival. Strong measures were necessary. George Hay, the district attorney of Virginia, therefore arrested Callender, and strove to treat him as McKean had treated Cobbett, seeking to put him in prison until he should give sufficient security that he would publish no more libels. Public opinion in a community which had lately been on the brink of civil war, because of the alien and sedition acts, was hardly ripe for this proceeding against Callender; and Hay was obliged to desist. Jefferson's ingenuity is well illustrated by the fact that, while the Federalists had been obliged to pass stringent laws in their efforts to punish libels, he was able to go quite as far in the same direction without passing any laws. What the law failed to do, however, a just, and, in Jefferson's eyes, a most merciful Providence did in silencing Callender, and removing him by drowning from the scene of his labors. He left, however, a rich legacy of scandal, which the opposition press turned to account. Just at this time, also, appeared the letter which Jefferson had written to Thomas Paine, inviting him to this country, and offering him a passage in a vessel of the United States.[2] Paine was then regarded by most decent persons as the libeller of Washington, the active enemy of Christianity,

[1] These letters, &c., were printed by Callender, in the "Richmond Recorder." See Hildreth, V. 453–455.

[2] Jefferson's Works, IV. 370.

and the foe of social order and the rights of property. To honor him in the name of the United States seemed to many, therefore, a startling and even monstrous proposition.

I have alluded to these two incidents of Callender and Paine, simply to show not only by his policy, but by his various public acts, the light in which Jefferson must naturally have appeared to his opponents. In judging of the position and actions of the Federalists, it is important to know how they regarded the head and single embodiment of the Democratic party. And to judge justly that or any other past time, or to weigh fairly the motives and actions of individuals or parties, we must remember that they did not have the strong illuminating side-lights by which posterity can form an exact opinion. I do not mean to justify or defend all the opinions of the Federalists in regard to Jefferson; but I do wish to describe their opinions, to prove that they were honest ones, and to enumerate the facts on which these opinions were based.

Towards the close of the year 1802 came the first breath from Europe of the storm which was destined to end in confusion the Presidential career now in such prosperous operation. News arrived that Bonaparte proposed to take possession of the Mississippi. The young life and commerce of the South-west were threatened with extinction, and great commotion and alarm ensued. Louisiana, therefore, was one of the subjects of the message, which also gave an outline of the new naval policy intended to replace that of the Federalists. This was simply to build a dry dock at Washington, where vessels were to be laid up and roofed over, so that the sun might not warp and crack them; and the scheme was supplemented by the first suggestions of the gun-boat plan. The chief interest of the session, however, was the Louisiana matter. The Federalists at once demanded information, which was refused; and then offered a resolution, asserting the right of

the people to the Mississippi, which was voted down. The only real or ostensible reason for this stifling process was the President's wish. While matters were in this state, the ferment and commotion continued in the Western States, on account of the Spanish obstruction of navigation, and the refusal of a place of deposit. Mr. Ross, therefore, brought forward a series of resolutions in the Senate, by which the President was authorized to seize New Orleans as a place of deposit in accordance with the treaty, and to raise fifty thousand men for carrying this resolution into effect. This was the Federalist policy, clear, sharp, decisive; but there were two fatal objections: it might lead to war, and, more awful still, it might lead to war with France. So the Federal plan was voted down, and the whole matter intrusted to the discretion of the President; while, in pursuance of the "wise frugality" policy, two millions were voted for the private intercourse fund. Scarcely had Jefferson's policy been adopted by Congress, when news came that Monroe and Livingston had purchased Louisiana for fifteen million dollars. Jefferson and his party acceded at once to the treaty. All the magnificent territory, which was thus obtained, was at that time *terra incognita*. Jefferson only knew that he had bought peace and the mouth of the Mississippi, and in his eyes these were worth any price. In such an opinion, and in his policy on this particular point, Jefferson was unquestionably right; but, in carrying out his policy, he violated the Constitution with an indifference which would have been striking in any one, but which, coming from a strict constructionist, was absolutely appalling. We do not need to go further than Jefferson's own letters, to find the most convincing arguments against the constitutionality of the Louisiana purchase.[1] Some faint show of a desire to amend the Constitution was the most that ever came, however, from the President's very correct opinions. Thus, the first exam-

[1] See above, p. 426.

ple was given of both the will and desire to violate the Constitution, if the popular feeling would sustain the executive and the legislature in so doing; and in this fact lies the pernicious and crying evil of the Louisiana purchase. It was the first lesson which taught Americans that a numerical majority was superior to the Constitution, was a safe protection against it when violated, and that, when policy proved the necessity of change, it was easier to break than to legally and regularly amend the provisions of our charter. The Federalist opposition on the ground of unconstitutionality was strong, and their position impregnable; but their resistance to the general policy was both factious and unwise. The people fully appreciated the immense advantage gained by the control of the Mississippi, and they asked to know no more.

The acquisition of Louisiana was regarded by the New England Federalists at the seat of government, and by extreme men of that party everywhere, with far different feelings from those which governed the rest of the people. The leaders in Congress saw clearly that this measure sealed their doom, that their political power would now be finally destroyed, and the principles of Democracy wholly prevail. They saw in Louisiana the question of life or death. They believed that these new and fertile regions would draw away all the population of the Northern and Eastern States, and would leave themselves beggars and outcasts. They were fully aware that the popular will throughout the length and breadth of the country was arrayed against them, and they knew of but one method of relief, — a dissolution of the Union. In a speech in October, 1803, Griswold of Connecticut sounded the keynote, when he said that the acquisition of Louisiana threatened a subversion of the Union; and, as they saw the fatal measure closing in upon them, the Federalists in Washington, stimulated by constant and embittering opposition, turned from threats to definite plans of separation. They

did not fear the measure of acquiring Louisiana *per se*, but the supremacy of Democracy, which was its meaning to them. They saw in it the assurance of a perpetuation of Jefferson's power and of his maxims, and with their opinions of both the man and his principles, they could not but regard their indefinite ascendancy with unmixed horror. Two other measures coincided with that involving Louisiana to spur them on to the last resort of American opposition. The amendment to the Constitution, providing for the separate election of President and Vice-President, was on the point of adoption. The Federalists had years before supported this same amendment as a security for their own tenure of power, and they rightly believed that it was now urged with a like purpose by their enemies. This, too, afforded fresh support to the hated supremacy of Democracy, and was a new stimulus to their spirit of desperate resistance. Far worse than this, in their eyes, was the attack on the judiciary, headed by Giles and Randolph. In the midst of the separatist schemes of the Federalists came that outrage on decency and justice, the trial and condemnation of Judge Pickering, quickly followed by the resolve ordering the impeachment of Judge Chase. The prime movers in this affair made no secret of their opinions that the judiciary ought to be a political body removable at will; and these impeachments were, as they openly avowed, but the preliminaries to a general onslaught upon the bench.[1] Beneath the mouthings of Giles and the diatribes of Randolph, we can now detect something else, which was not then perceived, — the feline hostility of Jefferson, aiming at the overthrow of John Marshall. Such a scheme as this might well have driven to desperation less heated and less determined men than the New England Federalists of that day. To them it seemed nothing less than the destruction of the last bulwark which sheltered their lives, their liberty, and their property from the tyranny of a mob.

Such was the condition of mind and such the circum-

[1] See above, p. 338; also Diary of John Quincy Adams, I. 322.

stances and the exciting causes at the period of the separatist scheme of 1803–4. It only remains to define the exact nature of the plan, to show who were interested in it, and to determine how far it progressed, in order to meet John Quincy Adams's first point, as stated at the beginning of this chapter. Much light has already been thrown upon this subject by the "Life of Plumer," and by Hamilton's "History of the Republic of the United States;" but the letters which follow, drawn principally from the Pickering MSS., leave but little to be added. The letters of Griswold, Tracy, and Hillhouse, would undoubtedly throw additional light on the subject; but, though our knowledge on this point may in future be amplified, I doubt if any essential change in it can be produced.

From the letters already printed and from those about to be given, it becomes evident that the scheme originated and was worked out wholly in Washington, by the Federalist members of Congress. Their aim was the establishment of a Northern Confederacy, to include the New England States and New York, and perhaps Pennsylvania. Colonel Pickering seems to have anticipated the ultimate addition of Canada, but I cannot find that this view was entertained by any one else. The theory was that a movement of this sort must come from the States interested through the medium of their Legislatures. This was the whole plan; and the only definite step actually proposed was a meeting of leading Federalists, among them Hamilton, to be held in Boston in the autumn of 1804. This meeting was to be for consultation; but the whole business had come to an end long before the period set for their assemblage, and, if any thing further had been needed, the death of Hamilton, which deprived them of their great leader, was a sufficient obstacle. But disapprobation had effectually checked even purposes of mere consultation. The only action taken was by the Federalists in Congress writing to their leading party friends in the different States, asking

their advice and urging them to push the scheme. Those principally concerned in originating the plan appear to have been Roger Griswold and Uriah Tracy of Connecticut, Colonel Pickering of Massachusetts, and William Plumer of New Hampshire. Hillhouse and the other Federalists in Congress sympathized and shared in the plan in a greater or less degree. Griswold's views and Plumer's have already appeared, and Colonel Pickering's are printed here in full.

Colonel Pickering addressed his letters on the subject to the principal Massachusetts Federalists, — King, Ames, Cabot, and Parsons among the number. The application was wholly unsuccessful. The party leaders at home had no faith in the scheme, and believed it neither necessary nor advisable. Hamilton was bitterly opposed to it. In his celebrated letter to Sedgwick, written just before his death, he says: —

"I will here express but one sentiment: which is, that dismemberment of our empire will be a clear sacrifice of great positive advantages, without any counterbalancing good; administering no relief to our real disease, which is democracy; the poison of which by a subdivision will only be the more concentred in each part, and consequently the more virulent."[1]

These views find an echo in the letters of Mr. Cabot, already given.[2] To Colonel Pickering he says: —

"All the evils you describe and many more are to be apprehended; but I greatly fear that a separation would be no remedy, *because the source of them is in the political theories of our country and in ourselves.* A separation at some period not very remote may probably take place. . . . *We are democratic altogether*, and I hold democracy in its natural operation to be *a government of the worst.*"

To King Mr. Cabot wrote: —

"I am not satisfied that the thing itself is to be desired. My habitual opinions have been always strongly against it, and I do

[1] Hamilton's Works, VI. 568. [2] See above, pp. 341, 345.

not see in the present mismanagement motives for changing my opinion."

Hamilton and Cabot considered the whole scheme impracticable and not justified by necessity; and they regarded it in the then state of public affairs, as they had always before deemed it, an evil in itself. In these views, Ames, Parsons, and King concurred. Similar opinions, if not quite so pronounced, were also entertained by Mr. Higginson and Mr. Lyman, to whom Colonel Pickering had also written. From New Hampshire, Mr. Plumer received letters which agree entirely in opinion with those of the Massachusetts and New York Federalists. Mr. Adams's own opinion is expressed in a letter to Plumer, whom he was not disposed to visit with the same indiscriminate censure which he displayed towards the citizens of his native State. Mr. Plumer's subsequent conversion had unquestionably much to do with this unusual mildness. Dec. 31, 1828, Mr. Adams wrote to Mr. Plumer: —

"There were moments of weariness and disgust in my own mind at the errors and vices of Mr. Jefferson's administration, when I almost despaired of the Union myself. That it affected you to the extent at one time of contemplating with favor the substitution of another and more compassable system of confederation, can be no disparagement to your understanding or your heart." [1]

Thus it will be seen that even Mr. Adams himself, when not borne away by a torrent of personal hatred, could regard with calmness the schemes for a dissolution of the Union, and deem such schemes no disparagement to either the heads or hearts of their projectors. In Connecticut alone did the plan seem to find any support, and even there it was very slight. I give below the only favorable letter I have been able to find printed or unprinted. In short, the reception of the scheme concocted in Washington was crushed by the leaders of the party elsewhere, and the whole project came to nothing. The men who nipped this plan in the bud were some of them those whom Mr. John Quincy

[1] Life of William Plumer, p. 304.

Adams impliedly points out as its principal aiders and abettors.[1]

But one word remains to be said before coming to the original documents. The tone in which the men of that day discussed the question of a dissolution of the Union is one that may well startle the present generation, which has passed through a great civil war in behalf of the Union, and has learned to consider the mere mention of separation as the blackest treason. The men who were prominent in 1804 regarded a separation of the States with no such feeling. It was a simple impossibility that they should do so. They had most of them arrived at manhood before Union was even thought of. They had passed through the period of dissolution under the Confederacy. They had formed our present Union from pure motives of policy, and they regarded separation in exactly the same way. The individuality and separate existence of the States were quite as familiar to them as the conception of union, and the sentiment of nationality at that time was still in its infancy. They had looked upon the Union, when it was formed, as an experiment; and they continued to so regard it. They looked upon it as an arrangement which might or might not succeed, but whose maintenance was a mere question of policy. Nor was this feeling confined to any section nor to any party. It had less strength in New England than elsewhere, and this is what gives to the separatist movements in New England a peculiar importance and significance. But the separatist feeling was universal, and broke forth at various

[1] It is but fair to say that Mr. Adams nowhere names the individuals whom he accused of participation in this scheme. But the whole tenor of his pamphlet points irresistibly to certain men, including Mr. Cabot; and on this I have based the statement in the text. As I think I have shown who were concerned in the plan, and who opposed and defeated it, Mr. Adams's implication, whether justly or unjustly interpreted by me, is of no material importance to the facts of the case. But, if I have not misunderstood his implication, it shows the wholesale and indiscriminate suspicion with which he included all alike, and the need of caution in accepting his conclusions generally, based as they were on insufficient material and dictated by the bitterest spirit of personal and political hostility.

periods before 1804 in all parts of the country. The minority in national affairs, if they felt themselves oppressed, turned instinctively to the governments to which they had always been accustomed to look for protection and support. Thus all parties and all leaders during the first twenty-five years of our government, when defeated and as they believed oppressed, looked naturally to their States as their protectors, and were ready to take the ground that the experiment had failed, and that it would be wise to try something different. Schemes of separation therefore were treated and discussed as any extreme, but nevertheless perfectly conceivable question of mere policy would be. The hard, matter-of-fact way, in which men seventy-five years ago argued about the advantages and disadvantages of a dissolution of the Union, was as natural and proper as it is for us to consider that question no longer an open one. To condemn them for the tone of their discussions on this matter would be as wholly unjust and unreasonable as it always is to brand individuals for the general opinions of any past age and society. The only rule here as in any similar case is not to try men by an abstract standard or by the ideas of posterity, until they have first been judged according to the standards and the ideas of the age in which they lived.

PICKERING TO STEPHEN HIGGINSON.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, Dec. 24, 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Although the end of all our Revolutionary labors and expectations is disappointment, and our fond hopes of Republican happiness are vanity, and the real patriots of '76 are overwhelmed by the modern pretenders to that character, I will not yet despair. I will rather anticipate a *new confederacy*, exempt from the corrupt and corrupting influence and oppression of the *aristocratic Democrats* of the South. There will be (and *our* children at farthest will see it) a separation. The white and black population will mark the boundary.[1] The British provinces,

[1] This prophecy came uncomfortably near verification.

even with the assent of Britain, will become members of the *Northern confederacy*. A continued tyranny of the present ruling sect will precipitate that event. The patience of good citizens is now nearly exhausted. By open violations and pretended amendments, they are shattering our political *bark*, which with a few more similar *repairs* must *founder*. Efforts, however, and laudable ones, are, and will continue to be made to keep the timbers together. The most distinguished you will find in the speech of Mr. Tracy, which I enclose. He has exhibited the excellency of the Constitution as it now prescribes the mode of electing the President and Vice-President, and pointed out the pernicious tendency of the proposed amendment. John Taylor,[1] the Goliath of the party, on this question attempted to support the amendment; but the ground was untenable, and his speech can do neither him nor the cause any honor. T. P.

Tapping Reeve to Uriah Tracy.[2]

[Extract of a letter from a gentleman of distinction in Connecticut to his friend in the city of Washington, dated Feb. 7, 1804.][3]

"I have omitted answering your letter until this time, that I might learn, if possible, the sentiments of others upon the subject of your letter. I shall continue to pursue the subject with all the industry I am capable of exercising, and will write to you again by the mail next week. The court is now sitting at Litchfield,[4] and I shall have further opportunities of learning the sentiments of influential people. I can now say that there never has been such an alarm excited in the minds of informed people as at the present moment. It seems to be a very general opinion that some method must be fallen upon to preserve ourselves from that ruin with which

[1] Colonel John Taylor, United States Senator from Virginia. He was the mover of the nullification resolutions of 1798–1799, in the Virginia House of Delegates. At this period, he was an ardent Unionist, and would have shrunk with abhorrence from the sentiments expressed in this letter. "Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur."

[2] This letter is indorsed by Colonel Pickering "T. R. to U. T.," and Mr. Octavius Pickering conjectures with indubitable correctness that the initials stand for the names which I have placed at the head of this extract. Tapping Reeve was a distinguished lawyer and judge in Connecticut. His wife was a sister of Aaron Burr, who knew of this scheme, and proposed, if it seemed profitable, to take part in it. See Life of Plumer, and Hamilton's History of the Republic; Davis's Life of Burr.

[3] This is Colonel Pickering's own head-note to the extract.

[4] Litchfield was the home of Tapping Reeve.

we are threatened. We are waiting with great anxiety to learn in what manner the amendment will be treated by Massachusetts. I have seen many of our friends; and all that I have seen, and most that I have heard from, believe that we must separate, and that this is the most favorable moment. The difficulty is, how is this to be accomplished? I have heard of only three gentlemen, as yet, who appear undecided upon this subject. Among these is ——. He is sufficiently alarmed, but afraid that the country is not prepared. I believe that some proper step must be taken before there will be that *preparedness* that he wishes. Mr. ——, I believe, retains a great degree of apathy. The other gentleman's opinion is, I believe, governed in some measure by Mr. ——.[1] But a settled determination that this must be done has taken fast hold of some minds, where you would expect more timidity. It seems to be the opinion of those with whom I have conversed that two things must be done with a view to accomplish the desired object, — one by you gentlemen of Congress, and the other by the Legislatures of the States. We believe, in the present state of alarm and anxiety among Federalists, that if you gentlemen at Congress will come out with a bold address to your constituents, taking a view of what has been done under the present administration, with glowing comments on the ruinous tendencies of the measures, and if this should be done before the sitting of our Legislature, or rather the election of the members thereof, that this will produce all that *preparedness* that is wanted. I know that it will animate the body of the people beyond any other possible method, and give a death-wound to the progress of Democracy in this part of the country. That this ought to be followed up by the Legislatures by such declarations as may have the strongest tendency to secure the object aimed at. In what manner this separation is to be accomplished is to me wholly in the dark, unless the amendment is adopted by three-fourths of the Legislatures, and rejected by Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut, upon the last ground taken by Delaware.[2] In such case, I can see a foundation laid."

[1] These blanks are all in the original.

[2] Note by Colonel Pickering. "That the amendment* had not constitutionally passed the two Houses of Congress; that is, by two-thirds of the entire number composing the respective Houses."

* This amendment had evidently from Colonel Pickering's speeches and letters been intended as the ground on which those who planned the separation wished

PICKERING TO THEODORE LYMAN.[1]

CITY OF WASHINGTON, Feb. 11, 1804.

DEAR SIR, — The conduct of our rulers reminds me of your early predictions, coeval I believe with Mr. Jefferson's inaugural speech. The public debt, indeed, is not annihilated; but in all other things they have, I suspect, surpassed your apprehensions. The removals from office have been gradual, not to shock the public mind. When the sensations produced by the political death of one distinguished Federalist are blunted, another victim is led to the altar; with the same view, removals and appointments are no longer made public. The changes which take place are but very partially known, — that is, only by the neighbors of the individuals respectively, — while the community at large is kept in ignorance of the accumulated evil. The violation of the Constitution, though not commenced, yet most remarkable in overthrowing the judiciary, is becoming habitual. The judges of the Supreme Court are all Federalists. They stand in the way of the ruling power. Its satellites also wish to occupy their places. The judges, therefore, are, if possible, to be removed. Their judicial opinions, if at all questionable, though *mere errors of judgment*, are interpreted into *crimes*, and to be grounds of impeachment. And, if these should fail, they are to be removed by the President, on the representations of the two Houses of Congress. At least, this is the doctrine of John Randolph, the leader of Democracy in the House of Representatives.[2] He says that the provision in the Constitution, that the judges should hold their offices *during good behavior*, was intended to guard them against the *executive alone*, and not by any means to control the power of *Congress*, on whose representation against the judges the President should remove them. Such a removal of some would, or at least ought to, occasion the resignation of all the rest. For as upright men, feeling for their own dignity and rights, how could they consent to hold their offices at the will and pleasure of such rulers?

[1] Mr. Lyman was connected by marriage with Colonel Pickering, his wife having been the latter's favorite niece, Miss Lydia Williams.

[2] In confirmation of this, see authorities cited above, p. 436.

to make their issue. Shortly before these letters sounding the leaders at home, Colonel Pickering had despatched to all parts of the country letters inveighing against this amendment, together with copies of the speeches which had been made in opposition to it in Congress.

The removal of good men from office, and the appointment of some of the worst in their places, have a pernicious effect on the public morals. Depravity is the surest road to preferment, while virtue and integrity are objects of virulent persecution. Hence, the open apostasy of many, before of decent character, but without stability to resist temptation. The removal of the present judges, and the appointment of unprincipled successors, will complete the catastrophe. The men of stern, inflexible virtue, who dare expose and resist the public corruption, will be the first victims; and the best portion of the community, already humbled, will be trodden under foot.

And must we submit to these evils? Is there no remedy? Is there not yet remaining in New England virtue and spirit enough, if a suitable occasion offer, to resist the torrent? The most intelligent of the Federalists here have been reflecting on this subject with the deepest concern. Massachusetts, as the most powerful, they say, should take the lead. At the word from her, Connecticut would instantly join. There can be no doubt of New Hampshire. Rhode Island would follow, of necessity. There would probably be no great difficulty in bringing in Vermont. But New York should also concur; and, as she might be made the centre of the Northern Union, it can hardly be supposed that she would refuse her assent. New Jersey would assuredly become an associate; and it is to be wished that Pennsylvania, at least east of the Susquehannah, might be induced to come into the confederacy. At no distant period, the British Provinces on the north and northeast would probably become a part of the Northern Union. I think Great Britain would not object; for she would continue to derive from them, when become States, all the commercial advantages they would yield if continued her provinces, without the expense of governing and defending them.

While thus contemplating the only means of maintaining our ancient institutions in morals and religion and our equal rights, we wish no ill to the Southern States, and those naturally connected with them. The public debts might be equitably apportioned between the new confederacies, and a separation somewhere about the line above suggested would divide the different characters of the existing Union. The manners of the eastern portion of the States would be sufficiently congenial to form a union, and their interests are alike intimately connected with agriculture and com-

merce. A friendly and commercial intercourse would be maintained with the States in the southern confederacy, as at present. Thus all the advantages which have been for a few years depending on the general Union would be continued to its respective portions, without the jealousies and enmities which now afflict both, and which peculiarly embitter the condition of that of the North. It is not unusual for two friends, when disagreeing about the mode of conducting a common concern, to separate, and manage each in his own way his separate interest, and thereby preserve a useful friendship, which without such separation would infallibly be destroyed.

If even the New England States alone were agreed in the first instance, would there be any difficulty in making frank and open proposition for a separation, on the principles above suggested?

The Northern States have nothing to countervail the power and influence arising from the negro representation, nor will they ever receive an equivalent. This alone is an adequate ground to demand a separation. The only practical equivalent is a direct tax, which will not be resorted to until all other means are exhausted; and in the mean time we suffer all the mischiefs which flow from an unequal representation.

Several distinguished men are turning the attention of their Eastern friends to the consideration of this subject; and it being of the highest importance, and requiring the most serious reflections, I have thought it right to present it to you.

With the greatest regard and esteem, I am, &c. T. P.

Theodore Lyman to Pickering.

Boston, Feb. 29, 1804.

Dear Sir, — I have carefully and with much solicitude perused the communications received in your letter. There are few among my acquaintance with whom I could on that subject freely converse; there may be more ready than I am aware of, and that are kept back under an impression that they are more singular in their opinion than they really are. Patient waiting with prudent management, by giving opportunity, when it occurs, of expressing sentiments, seems to be the only means to ascertain the opinion of gentlemen whose prudence, discretion, and good judgment are to be relied on. Many judicious and discerning men must see that one

encroachment after another on the fundamental principles of the Constitution lessens its solidity. Clearly perceiving the danger, they may yet feel at a loss how to counteract a system of proceeding which they are sure will ultimately destroy it, without endangering the peace and safety of their country. There is, besides, a large class of valuable men, whose business takes up the principal part of their attention, and who scarcely ever cast their eye toward the political horizon of their country; and they of course do not perceive the cloud that is gathering around it. Being themselves honest and true lovers of good government, they are ready to believe, if not at least to hope, that all are like unto themselves. These good people cannot be made to look up until the cloud shall have so much thickened that their prospects are darkened, and to feel their security is in danger. That such is the state of things may be to be regretted; but, if the picture is truly drawn, must not the remedy that is to be applied be in conformity thereto?

How the project of an adjustment,[1] as has been suggested, would suit the dominant party, is problematical. Men seldom are content to stop at any stage of power; and, possessing it so completely as they now do, is it reasonable to suppose that any proposition founded on reason, and that would in its tendency promote the united interest of the whole nation, — is it natural, or can it scarcely be hoped, that it would be well received?

You know full well my sentiments, and will believe me ready at all times, in any way that is in my power, to do those things which in their tendency shall promote the interest of my country.

Faithfully yours, THEODORE LYMAN.

PICKERING TO KING.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, March 4, 1804.

DEAR SIR, — I am disgusted with the men who now rule, and with their measures. At some manifestations of their malignancy, I am shocked. The cowardly wretch at their head, while, like a Parisian revolutionary monster, prating about humanity, would feel an infernal pleasure in the utter destruction of his opponents. We have too long witnessed his general turpitude, his cruel removals of faithful officers, and the substitution of corruption and looseness for integrity and worth. We have now before the Senate

[1] This refers to the taxation of slaves on the ground of representation.

a nomination of Merriweather Jones, of Richmond, editor of the "Examiner," a paper devoted to Jefferson and Jacobinism; and he is now to be rewarded. Mr. Hopkins, commissioner of loans, a man of property and integrity, is to give room for this Jones. The commissioner may have at once thirty thousand dollars in his hands to pay the public creditors in Virginia. He is required by law to give bonds only in a sum from five to ten thousand dollars; and Jones's character is so notoriously bad that we have satisfactory evidence he could not now get credit at any store in Richmond for a suit of clothes! Yet I am far from thinking, if this evidence should be laid before the Senate, that his nomination will be negatived! I am therefore ready to say, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." Corruption is the object and instrument of the chief, and the tendency of his administration, for the purpose of maintaining himself in power and the accomplishment of his infidel and visionary schemes. The corrupt portion of the people are the agents of his misrule. Corruption is the recommendation to office, and many of some pretensions to character, but too feeble to resist temptation, become apostates. Virtue and worth are his enemies, and therefore he would overwhelm them. The collision of Democrats in your State promises some amendment: the administration of your government cannot well be worse.

The Federalists here in general anxiously desire the election of Mr. Burr to the chair of New York, for they despair of a present ascendancy of the Federal party. Mr. Burr alone, we think, can break your Democratic phalanx; and we anticipate much good from his success. Were New York detached (as under his administration it would be) from the Virginian influence, the whole Union would be benefited. Jefferson would then be forced to observe some caution and forbearance in his measures. And, if a separation should be deemed proper, the five New England States, New York, and New Jersey would naturally be united. Among those seven States there is a sufficient congeniality of character to authorize the expectation of practicable harmony and a permanent union, New York the centre. Without a separation, can those States ever rid themselves of negro Presidents and negro Congresses, and regain their just weight in the political balance? At this moment, the slaves of the Middle and Southern States have fifteen representatives in Congress, and they will appoint that number of electors of the next President and Vice-

President; and the number of slaves is continually increasing. You notice this evil. But will the slave States ever renounce the advantage? As population is in *fact* no rule of taxation, the negro representation ought to be given up. If refused, it would be a strong ground for separation, though perhaps an earlier occasion may present to declare it. How many Indian wars, excited by the avidity of the Western and Southern States for Indian lands, shall we have to encounter, and who will pay the millions to support them? The Atlantic States. Yet the first moment we ourselves need assistance, and call on the Western States for taxes, they will declare off, or at any rate refuse to obey the call. Kentucky effectually resisted the collection of the excise; and of the thirty-seven thousand dollars' direct tax assessed upon her so many years ago, she has paid only four thousand dollars, and probably will never pay the residue. In the mean time, we are maintaining their representatives in Congress for governing us, who surely can much better govern ourselves. Whenever the Western States detach themselves, they will take Louisiana with them. In thirty years, the white population on the Western waters will equal that of the thirteen States when they declared themselves independent of Great Britain. On the census of 1790, Kentucky was entitled to two representatives; under that of 1800, she has *six*.

I do not know *one reflecting* Nov-Anglian who is not anxious for the GREAT EVENT at which I have glanced. They fear, they *dread* the effects of the corruption so rapidly extending; and that, if a decisive step be long delayed, it will be in vain to attempt it. If there be no improper delay, we have not any doubt but that the *great measure* may be taken, without the smallest hazard to private property or the *public funds*, the revenues of the Northern States being equal to their portion of the public debt, leaving that for Louisiana on those who incurred it.

Believe me ever faithfully yours, T. P.

The facility with which we have seen an essential change in the Constitution proposed and generally adopted will perhaps remove your scruples about proposing what you intimate respecting negro representation. But I begin to doubt whether that or any other change we could propose, with a chance of adoption, would be worth the breath, paper, and ink which would be expended in the acquisition.

KING TO PICKERING.

NEW YORK, March 9, 1804.

DEAR SIR, — I have duly received, and beg you to accept my acknowledgments for, your letters of the 3d and 4th instant. The views which they disclose ought to fix the attention of the real friends of liberty on this quarter of the Union, and the more so as things seem to be fast advancing to a crisis. To save the post, I can do little more than acknowledge the receipt of your letters. By the mail of to-morrow or Monday, I will send you a copy of my despatch to the Secretary of State respecting the effort I made to conclude a convention concerning seamen.[1] . . .

RUFUS KING.

PICKERING TO THEODORE LYMAN.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, March 14, 1804.

DEAR SIR, — I have received your letter of the 29th ult. Considering your connection with a certain cousin of yours, I thought it possible that you might deem it proper to start the idea to him. I had written to G. Cabot on the same subject. He had communicated my letter to Theophilus Parsons, S. Higginson, and Mr. Ames: they think the measure premature, while they deplore the existing evils and our future prospects. The idea suggested for your consideration is certainly extending, in Connecticut especially; and it begins to be entertained in New York. The character and proceedings of the virulent Clintonians in that State, with the declining of Chancellor Lansing to be the candidate for governor, will vastly aid Mr. Burr's pretensions, and from the intelligence we have here we expect that Mr. Burr will be elected. This will break the Democratic phalanx of that State, and prepare the way for the contemplated event. Mr. Burr's administration will be more liberal than that of the Clintonian or of the general government.

As for the Constitution, 'tis mere paper, to be folded into any shape to suit the views of the dominant party. Little regard is had in deciding political questions to it or to justice; and a great part of the public measures have a bearing on politics, being calculated to depress the Federalists and to increase the power and

[1] The letter goes on from this point, despite the haste necessary to save the post, for three closely written pages, on the subject of our foreign policy and impressment.

influence of their opponents. We have this day, upon an *ex parte* hearing, and against the testimonies of many respectable men of the insanity of Judge Pickering, district judge of New Hampshire, adjudged him guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors, and sentenced him to be removed from office. Justice should have presided at this trial, but was not admitted; nor will she again find a place in the court of impeachment. The *demon* of party governed the decision. All who condemned were Jeffersonians, and all who pronounced the accused not guilty were Federalists. Some members retired, without giving any vote. I am told that the "Aurora" has published that Mr. Harper was heard in defence of Judge Pickering, but *'tis false*. He was permitted to read a petition from Judge Pickering's son, setting forth his father's insanity and utter inability of body to appear in person to read his depositions, to prove the suggestions in the petition, and to enforce the prayer of it that the cause might be postponed. But Mr. Harper explicitly stated that he did *not appear* for Judge Pickering, but merely as his son's friend, and the friend of the court, to present and support the suggestions in his son's petition.

I am this moment informed that the House of Representatives have resolved to impeach Judge Chase. You may conclude he will be condemned. If a considerable majority of the House were to impeach any man in the United States, he would by the Senate be found guilty; because there could be no doubt that these measures originate with the administration, are made questions of *party*, and therefore at all events to be carried into effect according to the wishes of the prime mover. There will, to be sure, be some stretching of conscience. If several of the senators were left to decide the questions *individually*, their consciences would give way; but, when a number of consciences are *joined together*, they will bear much rough usage without being rent. Judge Chase will not be brought to his trial this session, for we hope to adjourn in two weeks. Disgusted and shocked with the proceedings of the ruling sect, I long to get away from such scenes of political profligacy and injustice. I have just now heard mentioned the means used to obtain the assent of Rhode Island to the alteration of the Constitution relative to the choice of President and Vice-President. The profligate rulers of that profligate State, it is said (and I believe truly), agreed to adopt the amendment, provided the Federal

officers in the State, especially the collectors of the customs, were removed, and that Jefferson promised to remove them. This, however, will not be done until Congress rises. He is fond of removing and appointing in the recess. The outrage becomes an old story before it is necessary to nominate the same men to the Senate.

Under such a man, and with the means he possesses and can command, corruption will continue to make rapid progress, all power will be thrown into the hands of his party in all the States, and the Federalists will curse the day which detached them from the milder government of the mother country.

Such is the fate which awaits us, and we shall live to see it; yes, the next Presidential term will not elapse before what is now anticipated will be verified. One or two Marats or Robespierres in each branch of the Legislature, with half a dozen hardened wretches ready to co-operate, a greater number of half-moderates, another portion of gaping expectants of office, another of the ignorant and undiscerning, with the many timid characters, will constitute a large majority, up to any measure which the revenge, the malice, the ambition, or rapacity of the leaders shall propose. It will be enough to render every such measure popular to declare its object to be to crush aristocracy and monarchy, and to secure liberty and Republicanism.

And are our good citizens so devoted to their private pursuits that they will not allow themselves time to look up and see the gathering cloud? Will nothing rouse them but its thunder, or strike their eyes save the lightning bursting from its bosom?

I am, indeed, sick at heart to see of our Revolutionary toils, dangers, and sufferings, such a result, and in the short space of twenty years! "A *virtuous* and *enlightened* people!" The ear is wounded by prostitution of those epithets. And is our case really hopeless? I have little to lose, except life, and that, verging to threescore years, is not worth much; yet I would fain die in peace, or, if that be denied, perish in the hope of leaving it an inheritance to my children, under a free government, established on surer foundations than that which only fifteen years ago we embraced with so much ardor. The experienced errors of the latter might, one would hope, be remedied under a Northern confederacy. Are stability, justice, and tranquillity incompatible with Republicanism?

You have mistaken, or I did not clearly express my meaning with regard to *an adjustment*. That must be a *subsequent* measure. If the States I mentioned were united, the rest would not dare to lift a finger against them. After the confederacy of the former should be fixed, the terms of intercourse with the others and the distribution of existing burdens would be agreed on.

I remain, my dear sir, very truly yours, T. P.

STEPHEN HIGGINSON TO PICKERING.

MARCH 17, 1804.

DEAR SIR,—I have seen your letters to Mr. Cabot and Mr. Lyman on the question of separation, which is a very delicate and important one, considered in the abstract. We all agree there can be no doubt of its being desirable; but of the expediency of attempting it, or discussing it now at this moment, we all very much doubt. It is dangerous to continue under the Virginia system; but how to extricate ourselves at present we see not, and, if we remain long together, we shall be bound with so many ligatures it will require great efforts to get extricated, and, in the present state of the public mind, even here no attempt can be excited. It would indeed be very unpopular to suggest the idea of its being either expedient or necessary. It is impossible to alarm, much less to convince, a large portion of the Federal party here of their danger. A small part only of those called Federal, and who in common cases usually go with us, are sound in their opinions, and willing to look into their real situation. Many even of our own party have as much yet to unlearn as to learn. They have yet much of the Democratic taint about them; and, with this nonsense in their brains and the influence of a former great man[1] and his friends, who will seize every occasion to keep up a division in the Federal party here, we should be put into the background, were we to make that question the subject of free conversation. As, in the present state of things, it would be imprudent even to discuss the question, we must wait the effects of still greater outrage and insult from those in power before we prepare for the only measure which can save the New England States from the snares of Virginia.

Democracy is rising, and will increase in this State. Our elec-

[1] Ex-President John Adams.

tions may this year give us a majority in both houses, and Governor Strong; but, without some favorable events, the Democrats will succeed another year, and we shall be revolutionized, and the other States will follow. Such is my view of our situation: it is the natural effects of existing causes, which will produce the change I contemplate, and I see no means in our power to control their operation. But as we may at times check, perhaps modify and often mitigate, by a vigilant and steady opposition, the effects of revolutionary measures, and give ourselves the chance of the chapter of accidents for a longer period of time, I am for remaining at our posts, ready to seize every favorable event and to keep the robin alive as long as we can.

Wishing as much success and happiness as can attend you, I am very truly yours, &c., S. HIGGINSON.

CHAPTER XII.

1804–1815.

New England Federalism and the Hartford Convention.

THE settlement of the Louisiana question concluded the most important political transaction of 1804. In the spring of that year, Mr. Jefferson overcame his scruples[1] in regard to a re-election, and accepted the nomination of his party caucus for a second term.

The same year was made memorable also by the closing scenes in the life of the President's great opponent. Just before the renomination of the former, Hamilton, not less illustrious at the bar than at the head of the Treasury, had fixed the attention of the country by his celebrated defence of the liberty of the press in the Croswell case. A few short months, and all these talents, all this genius, were hurried to a premature grave by the hand of Aaron Burr. The news of the terrible tragedy enacted that quiet summer morning, on the beautiful banks of the Hudson, spread fast and far. The whole country, forgetting for the moment party hatred, mourned the untimely death of one of her greatest men; while the Federalists were for the moment crushed by the unexpected blow. In Hamilton, they lost their greatest leader, the only man who had the power and the will to form them to new issues, and lead them again to success. By his death, Federalism received a check from which it never recovered, except in New England; and only unforeseen events renewed its strength there. Colonel Pickering's letters, at the opening of the next session, show plainly

[1] Jefferson's Works, II. 330, 331; III. 15.

that the material prosperity of the country during Jefferson's first term, the death of Hamilton, and the ill-judged resistance of the Federalists to the purchase of Louisiana, had done their work. When Massachusetts sent Democratic electors to vote for Jefferson, the end was near at hand, the Democratic tide was almost at its height; and the dissolution and re-formation of parties could not have been far distant. Colonel Pickering writes sadly of the decay of party spirit, and the absence of party feeling in Congress. Had it not been for Europe and Jefferson's foreign policy, the era of good feeling, the break-up of the old parties and the development of new ones, would have come in 1805 instead of in 1815. But it was destined to be otherwise; and the country at that very moment was on the verge of the most bitter and, in some respects, the sorriest political strife which our annals have to show.

The first signs of trouble were visible at the opening of the session of 1804–5. The renewal of war in Europe had brought with it a revival of impressments from our vessels; and the country was rudely awakened from its tranquillity to a sense that storms were brewing, and that "wise frugality" had left a maritime people not only without a navy, but destitute even of cannon or fortifications with which to guard their far-reaching sea-board and defenceless towns. The President, however, was fully prepared for the emergency. A further curtailment of the navy appropriation was of course obviously proper; but the protection of the coast had to be provided for, and the lack of fortifications supplied. With these last objects, appropriations were made for building twenty-five gun-boats, which were to be housed, and put in the water only when the stress of war was actually upon us; and a sufficient number of cannon mounted on wheels were to be in readiness to meet an attack at any point, and thus supply the need of permanent forts. By this simple device, expensive and immovable fortifications at all the ports would be avoided;

while travelling fortifications would always be on hand to be trundled from one harbor to another, in order to meet the enemy wherever he appeared. In this way, money was saved; and at the same time the country and the flag were protected.

The chief interest of the session, however, centred in a domestic question, the impeachment and trial of Judge Chase. Here the Federalists gained a decisive victory, and one whose importance it is now difficult to appreciate. By their efforts, Judge Chase was acquitted, the judiciary was saved, and its independence protected. At this time, too, the split, which had been anticipated by the Federalists, between the radical and conservative elements of the Democratic party, began to show itself. There can be no doubt that there were many men with just wit enough to be fascinated by Jefferson's theories, but wholly devoid of his tact, prudence, and address, whose designs fell little short of a complete revolution in our government. This faction suffered a severe defeat by the acquittal of Chase, and were suppressed and broken down by Jefferson, but still they were not idle elsewhere. Pierrepont Edwards's Democratic convention in Connecticut, and the furious partisan attempts to alter the Constitution of Pennsylvania, showed the existence and activity of a very dangerous and extreme party. Had not other events intervened, our politics might have turned at this point into channels very different from those actually taken.

The famous English admiralty decisions[1] were known here early in 1805, and produced a storm of indignation in all our commercial cities whose interests were most nearly affected. Not only were we in trouble with England, but our difficulties with Spain began to assume a threatening appearance. Once more the President proved himself equal to the occasion. At the opening of Congress in the autumn, more gun-boats were advised in the message; and money was required for secret objects. Jefferson wished to have

[1] See above, p. 314.

the Mediterranean fund, formerly used to buy off pirates, put into his hands, and no questions asked as to the purpose to which it was applied. A resolution in conformity with this plan was accordingly introduced in the House by one of the President's adherents. Information was demanded by the opposition as to the use for which this money was intended, but the "secret wishes" of the President was the only reply vouchsafed. In a spasm of self-respect, the House, while they voted the appropriation with their usual obedience, refused to raise it under cover of duties for the Mediterranean fund, although subsequently, by a trick which it is unnecessary to explain here, Jefferson succeeded in carrying his point, and in getting possession of the money in the form of the fund. His object was the very simple one of paying France to keep Spain in check.[1] He had already exhibited his tenderness to those nations by refusing our merchants permission to arm and protect themselves against the piratical cruisers in the West India islands; but his regard for the Latin races was still more severely tested, at this time, by the insults which the Spanish minister Yrujo heaped upon us. Not even the actual invasion of our territory by Spaniards seemed to Jefferson cause for prompt resistance. But while planning to subdue some hostile nations by the gentle arts of purchase, and by turning to their assailants the still unsmitten cheek for further blows, our government, in other directions, was both sensitive and even aggressive, and at once retaliated the English admiralty decisions by the non-importation act, the first of that dismal series of commercial restrictions for which we were indebted to another of Jefferson's many theories. The Federalists opposed this whole policy, on the ground that the trade affected by the British decisions was not a legitimate trade, but the growth of the European troubles; and they contended that non-importation was a measure which could lead only to war,

[1] See Annals of Congress, 1805, 1806, pp. 946–994, Debate on Spanish Affairs. Compare Jefferson, Works, IV. 587, and V. 27, 164, 181.

and to a war in defence of an illegal trade. Jefferson, however, was not neglectful of other weapons. One hundred and fifty thousand dollars was voted in order to fortify all our harbors, and two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for building more gun-boats. Nothing was done for the army, but the navy was attended to. No appropriation was made to repair some of the frigates which had been laid up; but they were sold, and thus turned to good account. The frames, too, of certain ships of the line were utilized by being cut up for the gun-boats. At the same time, the numbers of the seamen were limited, so that only enough were provided to man three frigates. The strong position acquired by these measures may be appreciated by the action of our government in the Peirce affair. Peirce, the captain of an American vessel, was killed near New York Harbor by a cannon-shot from a British cruiser; and, although Jefferson had just aimed a blow by the non-importation act at the commercial supremacy of Great Britain, he was both unwilling and unable to retaliate, or even to display any indignation for the death of Peirce. The only notice taken of the affair was to send a copy of the act, providing for our naval peace establishment, to the New York council, who had called upon the national government for defence, and to publish a proclamation ordering the offending cruiser to leave our waters. Thus, by these missives, a sense of our ability to enforce the demands of the proclamation was conveyed both to us and to the English. No evidence remains to show whether the British cruiser departed after this pitiable display of weakness on the part of our government.

Scarcely had the President succeeded in securing the Mediterranean fund, when it became known that Talleyrand threatened war, unless we abandoned our commerce with Hayti. This menace, conveyed through the medium of Turreau, the French minister, produced the desired effect; and an act of Congress, in conformity with the desires of

the President, forbade the obnoxious trade. The administration was ready to quarrel with the greatest maritime power in the world, the only one that could do us essential injury, because certain doubtful commercial rights had been infringed; while another branch of trade was readily prohibited in deference to the threats of France. The contrast between the policies pursued towards the two belligerents is, in this instance, sufficiently striking.

Difficulties, indeed, thickened rapidly about the President's path, as our affairs drifted off into the stormy sea of European politics. Before tracing their confused and intricate course, it will be of advantage to pause for a moment, in order to consider the relative positions of political parties and the principles by which each professed to be actuated. The foreign policy of the Federalists had been one of their greatest merits, and was simply that of a strong neutrality, now become traditional as the "Monroe doctrine." Jefferson's theory was to keep peace, at all hazards; to involve the country in no foreign connections, and yet at the same time, with marvellous inconsistency, to aid France and injure England to the utmost extent. To depress the latter and exalt the former, without engaging in actual war, were the sum and substance of Jefferson's tactics. When this was first attempted, at the period of the Genet difficulties, the immediate result was the baneful division of our people into a French party and an English party, instead of into two American parties. The wisdom of Washington and the clear judgment of Adams steered us through these first troubles, and the position of a strong neutrality was preserved. During Jefferson's first term, foreign politics did not disturb us; but they came again into prominence in 1805. In the interval, great changes had been wrought in Europe. France no longer fought under even the hollow pretence of republicanism, but solely to advance the hungry ambition of one man. England, in the words of John Randolph, was doing battle for the liberties

of mankind, and for the maintenance of civilized society, which was the opinion entertained by the Federalists. That this view was in general correct, few persons at this day would care to deny; but Jefferson, unluckily, thought differently.

Mr. John Quincy Adams — in the pamphlet so often referred to here — takes the ground that Jefferson had no partiality for Napoleon. This may be perfectly true. He may, perhaps, have had no love for Bonaparte, individually; but he nevertheless shaped his course in conformity with his old theory of supporting France against England. His admiration for the French and his hatred of England were, moreover, powerfully aided by his abject fear of the power of the modern Cæsar. The practical reasons for his policy are easily discerned. Jefferson relied on the popular feeling against England as a principal support to his political supremacy, and his *à priori* theories coincided fully with what he knew to be for his own interests. The destruction of the navy had deprived our neutrality of any strength it might have possessed; and Jefferson now destroyed neutrality itself, by putting the country as far as he could, without actually engaging in war, upon the side of Bonaparte. One immediate result was to drive his opponents into an extreme support of Great Britain. The Federalists had seen their naval policy overthrown, and now they beheld the country with all its vast and defenceless commerce launched upon a series of measures which must in the end lead to war. Jefferson was unquestionably sincere in his desire for peace at all risks, and the Federalists understood this fact perfectly; but they nevertheless believed that his measures made the preservation of peace ultimately impossible. Strongly attached as they were to the commercial interests, they dreaded war with any power, but they utterly abhorred the thought of a conflict with the one nation which seemed to them the champion of the liberties of mankind and the independence of neutral nations. They feared a

necessary and a just war as little as any one; but they were bitterly opposed to a policy that supported the interests of a gigantic despotism, and furthered schemes of Corsican brigandage, in which nations were the victims, and myriads of soldiers the robbers. There is no need of supposing, with Colonel Pickering, that Jefferson was the minion and hireling of Bonaparte. This was the exaggerated charge of a heated and bitter partisan. But nothing can be clearer than that Jefferson steadfastly pursued his policy of adhering to the French and attacking the English interests. Great Britain, it is true, treated us disgracefully; and in all our relations with her we exhibited a strange mixture of proud sensitiveness and impotent resistance. Whereas the outrages of France, who behaved with still greater brutality, and heaped insults upon us with generous profusion, were quietly discussed, and then hidden and shuffled over with a tameness that is even now very trying to contemplate. If the Federalist admiration and support of England were extreme and unwarrantable, they are at least better than the hushed and stealthy subserviency to France displayed by their opponents. Both sides of the picture are dark, neither can give aught but pain to an American, but the blame must fall chiefly on those who wielded the powers of government. Those men, and those alone, were responsible, who, not content with destroying our only weapon, the navy, crippled our resources by a succession of measures which nearly drove a large and populous section of the country into open revolt, and who, having made war the only possible result, then refused to fight, and left us to be kicked about at the mercy of the two great European powers. The two parties were in this way arrayed against each other on the question of supporting French or English interests, while they never ceased to proclaim in the loudest possible manner that they had no intention of supporting either. The issues arising from such a condition of affairs were so confused and so falsified

that even now it is no easy matter to determine what any one really wanted, while, as if to make confusion worse confounded, the administration persisted in a policy that was no policy, but only a vague jumble of theories.

Alarmed by the dangerous aspect of our foreign relations, Jefferson determined to make, in appearance at least, a genuine effort for a stable peace with Great Britain. With this purpose, he despatched Mr. Pinkney to England early in the autumn of 1806, and joined him as special commissioner with Mr. Monroe to conclude a treaty. Many previous attempts to settle the vexed question of impressment had been made, and had thus far proved fruitless. The subject, although not mentioned in the Jay treaty, had been discussed by the negotiators; and John Marshall, at the close of the last century, had urged the necessity of a settlement upon the attention of the British ministry. Mr. King, then minister to England, soon after renewed the negotiation, and would have succeeded in obtaining a settlement, had it not been for the determination of the British ministry, at the last moment, to retain the right of search in the narrow seas. The inadmissibility of such a claim forced Mr. King to break off the negotiation. During the summer previous to Mr. Pinkney's departure, Mr. Madison had urged upon Mr. Merry, the British minister, the propriety of a neutral flag, protecting against seizure and impressment; and Mr. Monroe, then in London, had been instructed to press the same doctrine, and to protest against the recent admiralty decisions. When Mr. Pinkney was joined with Mr. Monroe, in order to give weight to the commission and to hasten the conclusion of a treaty, circumstances were peculiarly favorable to a successful issue. The short-lived ministry of Charles Fox and "all the talents," who regarded us with much more kindness, and were disposed to treat us with greater justice than were their Tory predecessors, was then in power. Fox himself was then laboring under the malady so soon to prove fatal, and Lords Auckland and Howick were

therefore appointed to treat with the American commissioners. The first question was, of course, that of impressment. Monroe and Pinkney contended that this was merely a municipal right, while the English commissioners held that it was a prerogative of the crown, a universal legal right, — the protection of their navy, — and finally and conclusively that no ministers would dare to renounce it. Lords Auckland and Howick declared, however, that though the ministry dared not at that moment abandon this right by a formal treaty, yet that special instructions should be given to avoid molesting any American-born citizens, and that in case of such injury the speediest redress should be given. These pledges were reduced to writing, both parties reserving all their rights in the matter for future negotiation. The American commissioners were also given to understand, and did in fact believe, that impressment would not be attempted except where deserters from the British navy were known to be on board an American vessel; and they felt convinced that this was a practical, if not a formal, settlement of the question. It was at any rate the greatest concession ever made by England on this point, and Monroe and Pinkney, satisfied that the practice of impressment would be silently abandoned, determined to accept the British note, and to proceed with the negotiations, although in so doing they violated their instructions. After the removal of this obstacle, a treaty was soon concluded, which did not differ essentially from that of Mr. Jay. On the question of the carrying trade, whose invasion had been the cause of the present difficulties, the rights claimed by the United States were practically admitted. Just as this treaty was about to be signed, news of the Berlin decree arrived. The British commissioners did not on this account withhold their signatures from the treaty, but merely entered a protest, reserving the right of retaliation, if the decree were enforced against neutrals. Soon after, England did in fact retaliate, by proclaiming a blockade of the French coast from Brest to the mouth of the Elbe.

In the mean time, Congress met; and the President, in consideration of the promising aspect of the English negotiation, successfully recommended a suspension of the non-importation act. Preparations for war were not relaxed. An increase of the army was defeated; but the munificent sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars was voted for fortifications, and the President obtained a like amount for his favorite gun-boats, though the latter appropriation was stricken out afterwards by an unfeeling Senate. At the same time, five hundred additional seamen were voted for the navy. These were the principal government measures, when a negotiation of doubtful result was pending with England on questions involving peace or war; and when Napoleon had flung in our face an imperious prohibition of our commerce. Other troubles were not wanting. Yrujo, who had publicly insulted our government, and been dismissed in consequence, had been sent back by Bonaparte's influence. The President's Spanish negotiations were looking very black, while at the same time Turreau was dragooning our unfortunate administration in regard to a French claim. But these were trifling matters in our relations with France, compared with what followed. The battle of Trafalgar had annihilated the strength of Napoleon at sea, and forced him to resort to other methods for the destruction of England. Master of continental Europe, he issued from the field of Jena the famous Berlin decree, by which Great Britain was declared in a state of blockade and all commerce with her was forbidden, and by which the greater proportion of American shipping was threatened with seizure and confiscation. When the news was received, at the beginning of the year, insurance rose ruinously, and commerce almost ceased. Armstrong, our minister at Paris, wrote that the French government did not intend to disturb our commerce; but his correspondence with the French minister, when laid before Congress, was not entirely reassuring on this point. Our measures of defence under these

circumstances have already been alluded to, but the tone of the debates at this time is not without interest. The sentiments expressed by members of that party, which Mr. Adams, disgusted by the lack of patriotism among the Federalists, soon after felt obliged to join, are quite instructive. One gentleman, opposing appropriations for forts and ships, said that in case of a war we could abandon our harbors and sea-coast, and all retire to the interior. Another patriot, — one Smilie, of Pennsylvania, — whose sensitive nature would have shrunk from the black treasons of Federalist New England, as depicted by Mr. Adams, now proclaimed the doctrine that rather than vote money for a fleet he would leave the country undefended. The iron of a "wise frugality" had certainly entered very deeply into these men's souls. The fact was, that the whole Democratic party was completely demoralized. Without leaders, devoted to French principles, hating Great Britain, afraid of war, detesting commerce and New England, the dominant majority presented a sorry sight. They do not seem to have known what they wanted, or even what they did not want. They were resolved to obey Jefferson, and they knew this must be right; yet they could not help perceiving that the country was drifting into a dreaded and, worst of all, into an expensive war. Their last resource, at this trying moment, was to cut down appropriations and pursue, as long as possible, the precepts of economy. Now it was that Jefferson wrote despairingly to Nicholas, begging him to come to Washington and take command of their "well-disposed," but sadly inefficient forces.[1]

With affairs in this wretched state, the country alarmed and the ruling party demoralized, the treaty arrived from England. It was a better treaty than Jay's treaty of 1795, it was a far better treaty than that of 1815. If it was right to make and ratify those treaties, it was far more surely right to make and ratify this one. No mention of

[1] See above, p. 425.

impressment was made in Jay's treaty; and at the treaty of 1815 we failed even to press our objection to it, though for that, and that alone, we had just fought a long and well-nigh ruinous war. In 1806, large concessions, and the only ones ever granted, were made to us on the subject of impressment, and all our rights in the matter were reserved for further negotiation. The posture of affairs abroad was far graver and more threatening in 1806 than in 1795, and quite as much so as in 1815. In 1806, we were wholly unprepared for war; while in 1795 we were united, and in 1815 flushed with some success in fighting. If it was beneath the national dignity to accept any thing short of a formal stipulation in 1806, then it was baseness in Washington to accept less in 1795, and simple treachery and cowardice in Madison to abandon our rights in 1815. The treaties of 1795 and 1815 were eminently wise and proper measures: one saved us from war, the other arrested it. The treaty of 1806 was a better treaty, was more demanded by circumstances than either of the other two, and was a more clearly judicious measure. The difference in the cases is the difference in the several individuals to whom the guidance of the country was at the moment intrusted. In the one case, it was Washington, wise, dignified, and calm; in the other, it was Madison, prudent, sagacious, and badly frightened; in the third, it was Jefferson, crafty, selfish, and a French *doctrinaire*. Washington and Madison ratified their treaties, Jefferson rejected his. Without a word to the Senate, or to any one but Madison, the treaty of 1806 was thrown aside; and the war of 1812, with all the miserable years which preceded it, was made inevitable. The history of the time presents no single valid reason for Jefferson's secret rejection of the treaty. To the character and principles of the man, we must alone look for explanation. It was the old story: a hatred of England and a love of France, a policy of covertly injuring one and aiding the other, and a firm belief that

a constantly manifested detestation of England was the best way to popular support. His views and objects at this time are summed up in his remark to Dr. Logan, an intimate friend, and then a senator from Pennsylvania: "To tell you the truth, doctor, I do not wish to have any treaty with them." To quote Logan's own words: "An impression was made on my mind that Mr. Jefferson did not at that time wish a treaty of peace and commerce with England. I perfectly recollect he terminated a conversation on this subject, by observing that before a treaty could be ratified with Great Britain she might no longer exist as an independent nation. I am of opinion Mr. Jefferson declined making a treaty with England, not from his hatred to that country, but from his fear of the overwhelming power of Bonaparte."[1] For the gratification of theory, and of mingled emotions of hatred, affection, and fear, and for the preservation of popularity, Jefferson rejected the treaty, and in so doing involved his country in privations, disgraces, and finally in an abortive and nearly ruinous war.[2]

The Federalists were bitterly disappointed by the loss of the treaty, not simply because they represented the great commercial interests so wantonly exposed to destruction, but because they believed that the rejection of the treaty would sooner or later end, not only in war with England, whom they regarded as the champion of constitutional liberty, but also in a subservient and dependent alliance with France, or, in other words, with Bonaparte,

[1] Pickering MSS.

[2] See Monroe's letters in State Papers, as to the treaty and its rejection. The reason given by Jefferson for this course was that we could never, consistently with our national honor, recognize by treaty the principle of impressment. To which it may be replied that no mention of impressment was made in the treaty, and in the informal notes on the subject all rights were expressly reserved, and the way for future negotiations explicitly left open. Thus, Jefferson's reason, if sincere, was shallow and unfounded, — so shallow and so obviously unfounded that it is evident it was adopted merely as a blind, and was not the true ground for the rejection.

whom they believed to be establishing a universal despotism. Their hatred of Jefferson could not become under any circumstances more intense, but it could and did become more active.

The rejection of the Monroe and Pinkney treaty was the turning point in the history of those troubled times, and it offers a good opportunity to compare once more the policy of the contending parties. On the one side was Jefferson, at the head of a great majority, in complete possession of all departments of the government. The policy of the leader and of the party was to aid France without going to war with England, and to bend every thing to continuing their own popular support, by exciting hatred of Great Britain and by sacrificing every interest to a false economy. Acting on such principles, the dominant party had stripped us of our navy, our army, and our forts, — in short, of every means of defence. From the same motives, they had, while tamely submitting to the French aggressions, resisted violently those of England, and by the rejection of the treaty had exposed our vast and unprotected commerce to the dangers of an unavoidable war with the one great maritime power of the world. On the other side were the Federalists, numerically weak, but respectable by their wealth, their abilities, and their character. They wished to arm the nation, to equip the navy, to make peace and perhaps an alliance with England, and, if necessary, declare war with France. In this way, they would have protected both our dignity and our commercial interests; and, whatever the faults of such a policy, it had at least the merits of decision and intelligibility. The Federalist plan was never tried; but the other, if it can be called a plan, was tried to the bitter end. If the history of the next nine years justified its adoption, there is nothing more to be said; but as the policies appeared in bold contrast, in 1806, there would seem to be little room for hesitation in deciding which was the more dignified, the more reasonable, and the more manly of the two.

We can see now that the rejection of the treaty made war ultimately inevitable; but such was not Jefferson's view, and he determined to renew the negotiations forthwith. Matters were very soon still further complicated by the British outrage upon the "Chesapeake." This insult was received with general indignation, and every feeling was for the moment swallowed up in the sense of national dishonor. Mr. Adams, in describing the action of the Federalists, says that George Cabot, John Lowell, and Theophilus Parsons took no part in the indignation meetings that were held in Boston. While this shows the extreme bitterness of party spirit, it also shows that these were men who would not at any time, or under any circumstances, pledge their support to an administration which they held responsible for all our trouble, and for the disgrace to which we had been subjected. They did not believe that the national honor or dignity could be preserved while the Jeffersonian system was in force, and they were not willing to belie their opinions even to save their popularity.

Jefferson managed the "Chesapeake" affair with that curious mixture of defiance, springing from his hatred of England, and of feebleness derived from his determination not to fight in any event. He at once published a proclamation, ordering British men-of-war to leave our waters, and at the same time demanded satisfaction from the British government, coupling the demand with the old question of impressment. When the attempt to reopen negotiations was thus made, affairs had changed in England most unfavorably to our interests. The administration of "all the talents" was no more, and Tories reigned in their stead. Mr. Canning roughly refused to consider the questions of satisfaction for the "Chesapeake" and impressment, when thus united; but a minister, Mr. Rose, was at once sent to America to offer sufficient reparation.[1] He declined, however, to treat until Jefferson's pro-

[1] The Federalists thought the reparation offered sufficient at the time; but they would not, as sympathizing with England, be considered trustworthy.

clamation was withdrawn, and his mission ultimately came to nothing. In the mean time, Great Britain issued a proclamation calling in all British seamen, and directing the officers of the navy to seize and impress such seamen, wherever found. Against this, Mr. Monroe, before his departure, protested strongly; and Mr. Canning thereupon sent a final reply to the American commissioners. He refused to renew negotiations on the basis of a treaty which had been signed and then rejected, but was willing to open new negotiations; and so the hopes of peace in that quarter ended for the present. The policy of the administration irritated England and displayed our weakness, and by this happy combination exposed us to all the brutal arrogance and sarcasm that Mr. Canning chose to indulge in.

In the message with which he met Congress in the autumn of 1807, Jefferson explained his views. He said it was proper to exclude offending vessels from our harbors by proclamations, but he added that it was obviously wrong to keep up a force sufficient to compel obedience. The British infringement of the neutral coasting trade in Europe was enlarged upon with great warmth. As to the other belligerent, the President was less communicative, although the French seizures and captures of our vessels had gone on steadily and with rapid increase. Jefferson also announced that Spain had promulgated a similar decree, and he expressed to Congress a natural curiosity to know whether the Spanish would follow the example of their French masters, and prey upon our commerce. Still, the situation was grave enough to suggest the advisability of measures of defence. A million and a half was accordingly proposed in Congress for the gun-boats, and thus one hundred and eighty-eight of them were to be provided. Seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars was proposed for fortifications. The Federalists wished this

Since Mr. Madison, five years later, accepted the very same kind and amount of reparation for the "Chesapeake," I feel authorized in calling it "sufficient."

last appropriation doubled, but were refused, because the money was not merely to repair permanent, but to supply movable forts or cannon, by which any other kind of coast defence would be superseded. The proposition to enlarge and strengthen, or rather to build, a navy, was promptly voted down, and the gun-boat scheme was substituted for it. Indeed, one argument made at the time to such a scheme seems conclusive. Were we to build a navy, it was urged, the British would at once seize it, as they did the Danish fleet; and we should then have had all our trouble and expense for nothing.[1]

While these measures were under discussion, news came of the English proclamation recalling all British seamen and of the extension of the Berlin decree. Information also arrived that the Berlin decree had been interpreted so as to cover American vessels, and that the doctrine had been carried out by the condemnation of the "Horizon." Papers relating to these matters were laid before Congress, but certain other papers which had come to the President at the same time were withheld. The suppressed documents formed the correspondence between Armstrong and Champagny, in which the former had asked for explanations in regard to the extended construction of the Berlin decree, and the latter had replied by avowing that the one object of the decrees was to unite the world against Great Britain, the enemy of the Emperor. Rumors were also afloat of the intended publication of new and more stringent orders in council.

The time seemed to have arrived when Jefferson's guiding theory of no wars and no treaties with anybody at any time must break down. War or alliance with one of the two great belligerents certainly appeared unavoidable. But Jefferson was master of the situation. He extricated one theory from its difficulties by resorting to another. Instead of fighting or negotiating with either of our enemies, he pursued the simpler and more peaceable plan of bringing

[1] Annals of Congress for 1807-8, pp. 1072-1074, and 1090.

the great combatants in Europe to their knees by a series of restrictions on our own commerce. On the night of December 22d, the embargo law was forced through by an obsequious majority, acting in obedience to the nod of their chief, and the interests of a large body of the people were silently sacrificed. The Federalists, embittered by this defeat, accused the President of acting in obedience to French commands: they stigmatized him as the hireling of Bonaparte. We can now readily believe that Jefferson was guided in this matter solely by a preconceived theory as to the best kind of stern and dignified foreign policy, but it must be admitted that the Federalists had good reasons for their charges of French influence. The worst feature of the measure was the President's concealment of the fact that the embargo might be permanent, while he permitted the country to suppose it only temporary. The embargo, moreover, though directed against both belligerents, really injured England alone,[1] and was a pure benefit to France. Yet this measure, so clearly advantageous to France and hostile to England, was passed when we had just received tidings of fresh aggressions from the former, as well as from the latter. This was certainly strong *prima facie* evidence of French influence; and the Federalist convictions on that point became, if possible, deeper and stronger than ever.

The absolute futility of such measures as the embargo has been long since demonstrated, and no civilized nation to-day would seek the possible injury of its enemies by its own certain impoverishment. But this general principle was by no means thoroughly established in 1807, when navigation acts still flourished, and when the memory of the Revolutionary non-intercourse was fresh among the people of the United States. Yet, tried merely by the canons of common sense, the embargo, under the circumstances of that time, was as obviously bad as it is now in the light of the principles of political economy. By the embargo, about one-sixth of the

[1] Jefferson to Rodney, Works of Jefferson, V. 275.

English commerce was cut off, while the whole of ours was destroyed. To begin with, therefore, the exchange was an unequal one. But the theory of the embargo was wholly false, for it assumed that a great and powerful nation, mistress of the ocean, flushed with the triumphs of Nelson, struggling as she believed for very existence, would, by a partial injury to material interests and to a fraction of her mercantile population, be constrained to make concessions to an unarmed republic acting apparently in the interests of her most deadly enemy. Moreover, English statesmen perceived readily enough that our loss must eventually be their gain, and that our voluntary abandonment of an immense carrying trade would leave them without a rival. Almost any one but Jefferson would have appreciated the hard facts of the case, and would have yielded to them; but preconceived and rooted theories are fatal to statesmanship as well as to the dictates of reason. Unfortunately, the theorist in this instance was the possessor of a large and powerful party organization, devoid both of theories and sense, and only wise enough to blindly follow their leader. The embargo policy also strained the Constitution to the utmost, but this was a trifle in the eyes of a party accustomed to violate its provisions.

The measure had one effect, however, which was not foreseen at the moment. It breathed renewed life into the expiring Federalist party, and served to render them once more a united and formidable opposition, although its first result was the open defection of one of their most prominent leaders. Mr. John Quincy Adams seized upon this occasion to leave his party, and declare his faith in the purposes of the President. Filled with the spirit of nationality, stung to the quick by the sense of national injuries, and by nature combative and aggressive, Mr. Adams, with characteristic independence and disregard for consequences, rushed to the support of what he supposed to be the first effort of determined and warlike resistance. Posterity can under-

stand his motives, and respect his courage and his objects; but they can also see how fatally he blundered both in occasion and time. Devoted to national principles, Mr. Adams became the advocate of a measure wholly sectional in its practical operation, and calculated more than any other to kindle into a fierce flame the slumbering embers of separation. To avenge national dishonor, he supported a measure degrading in itself, ruinous in its results, and which subjected us to outrages that made all previous ones seem gentle in comparison. He deserted a party in which he held the place of leader, and whose movements he might have influenced, to enter into one which moved at the touch of a single man. Disgusted with the partisan spirit of the Federalists, he supported Jefferson, who deceived him as to the nature of the embargo, who exacted a blind and unquestioning obedience, and whose measures he was compelled to urge without even inquiry for their reasons.[1] He broke finally with Pickering, Ames, Cabot, Otis, and all the New England Federalists; and he parted for a time from King, Marshall, Morris, and all the leading Federalists elsewhere. In their stead, he substituted Mr. Giles and others of the same stripe. With Giles, indeed, he entered into a mutually affectionate and laudatory correspondence; and this, be it remembered, was the same gentleman whom in later years Mr. Adams described as "of a character black with private infamy, . . . rising to power on the ruins of honor and virtue."[2] And all these sacrifices were made in behalf of a measure at once feeble, destructive, and dangerous. The results of Mr. Adams's course were certainly very different from the motives.

Mr. Adams's change of party was of course received with the deepest indignation in New England, where the old triangular fight was at once renewed with fresh bitterness. No one knew better than Mr. Adams the men with whom he had to deal; for he was of them, if not with them. They held the power in Massachusetts, they regarded him as an

[1] See above, p. 425. [2] J. Q. Adams's Diary, VII. 369.

apostate, and politically speaking they cut his throat without the slightest compunction. He would have performed the same friendly office for them, if he could; he would not have shown mercy, he could have expected none, and it is but fair to say that, if he did, he was soon undeceived. In the political warfare then raging, no quarter was given, least of all to one esteemed a deserter. Mr. Adams, in his pamphlet, attempts a defence of the embargo, which amounted merely to saying that our ships were saved by it from certain capture. In other words, to sacrifice all our shipping and all our commerce, to throw our whole sea-faring and ship-building population out of employment, and to awaken hatred and distrust of the national government, was wiser than to risk the loss at the hands of England and France of a portion of our vessels, and to rouse thereby a general spirit of national resistance. If the embargo is defensible on such grounds, it is useless to argue about it.

I have anticipated the course of events, in order to describe Mr. Adams's revolt from the Federalists, which formed an important feature in their history, and which gave to Mr. Adams himself the unquestioned position of their strongest accuser and opponent.

The embargo was received by New England in sullen silence. The people looked upon it as merely temporary, a first step to armed resistance; and they accepted it as the forerunner of a necessary, if unpleasant, solution of their difficulties. The arrival soon after of the new orders in council and of the Milan decree seemed to justify the adoption of any measure, no matter how stringent and unpalatable. Both parties engaged actively in the agreeable task of accusing each other of foreign sympathies; and the Federalists no longer made any secret of their belief, that we ought to side with England or at least ought to make war on France. Jefferson's party had apparently come round entirely to Bonaparte's view, that there ought not to be any neutral commerce; and an unfortunate Feder-

alist, who spoke in Congress of alliance with England, was promptly denounced as a traitor. The long suppression and final forced disclosure of Champagny's letter, which ordered us to go to war with Great Britain under penalty of losing all our vessels, gave additional reasons for believing in the dangerous and degrading nature of French predilections. All this received confirmation from the failure of Mr. Rose's negotiation, through the seeming reluctance of the administration to do any thing that might result in a lasting peace with Great Britain. Yet with the gulf ever widening between us and England, with fresh insults from France, and with the prospect of a maritime war staring us in the face, the navy was still neglected. The naval policy of the administration cannot be too much insisted on; for, had a different course been pursued in this respect, we should have been in a position to assert our rights and maintain our neutrality, or, if need were, to fight successfully.

The opportunity offered to the Federalists by the embargo was not long neglected. Colonel Pickering made it the object of bitter attack in a letter addressed to Governor Sullivan. To this assault, Mr. Adams replied; and the paper controversy was waged with great vigor, while public feeling rose steadily in hostility to the measure. Another effect of the new policy was soon felt in the treatment we received abroad. Both belligerents seized on this opportunity to harass us without mercy; but the French were especially severe, and indeed rather ungrateful, for they alone had benefited by our restrictive measures. The Bayonne decree struck a fresh blow at the rights of neutrals; and, while France undertook to enforce the embargo by seizing our ships, Great Britain connived at our trade, and aided our merchants to evade the law. Both infringements of our sovereignty were made the subject of bitter though helpless complaint.

Having shown Europe the danger of arousing us to a

policy of commercial restrictions, Jefferson now sought to make terms by offering a cessation of the embargo. If Great Britain would withdraw her orders, the embargo would be repealed, as far as she was concerned. If France would withdraw her decrees, the embargo would be repealed as to the French; and it was hinted that, if England did not then revoke the orders in council, we would go to war with that power in the interests and as the ally of France. This gave an opportunity for fresh insults from both nations. Mr. Canning replied to Mr. Pinkney's inquiries that, while cherishing no sentiment of hostility towards the United States, England was far from desirous of appearing to deprecate the embargo, which she conceived to be wholly in the French interest. France contented herself with a simple refusal to treat on the subject at all; and with good reason, for the embargo satisfied her completely. Armstrong wrote from Paris "that we had overrated our means of coercion;" and poor Pinkney, who had been made the butt of Canning's sarcasm, sent to Mr. Madison despatches brimming over with helpless rage and mortification. That the embargo had utterly failed of the great results expected abroad was now clear to every one except the father of the measure.

At home, matters were still worse. The people of the commercial States, who had endured the embargo while they supposed it merely temporary and initiative, passed rapidly from a state of sullen submission to one of active and violent anger, as it gradually dawned upon them that the ruin of their commerce was intended to be a permanent policy. The Federalists, in full accord with the rising public sentiment, strained every nerve to rouse and invigorate the opposition to the measure. In Boston, even the Republicans remonstrated by a memorial to the President. A storm was fast gathering, which threatened to overthrow the political fabric of the Democracy.

But Jefferson was as blind as ever. Even his marvellous political tact seems at this juncture to have failed him, so

spell-bound was he by the delusions of his theory; and when Congress met he sent them a message filled with praises of the embargo as the safeguard of our commerce. But, though Jefferson was blind, his timid followers began to lose heart, and to dimly appreciate that there was something in the economy of nature more imperative than the wishes of the President. But they did not yet dare to revolt from their master; and they voted the resolutions of the committee on foreign relations, embodying the views of the administration, and possessing at least the merit of simplicity. They merely declared that we had done nothing to justify the injurious conduct of France and England, and therefore that the embargo was a good and wise policy, and ought to be maintained in its entirety. A sharp debate followed; but even proof of a request from English merchants to their own government to enforce the embargo produced no effect, and the motion for repeal was defeated.

This was almost the last Jeffersonian victory in 1808; and we may fitly pause here, and consider the accusation of Mr. Adams which relates to the conduct of the Federalists during this exciting period. The second, third, and fourth of Mr. Adams's charges, as stated at the beginning of the last chapter, were that the plot of 1804 for a dissolution of the Union was never abandoned, but was renewed in 1807 and 1808; that the Federalist leaders aimed at a dissolution of the Union, because a dissolution was intrinsically good; and that these same leaders were in communication with Great Britain. The two first propositions can be answered together, the last will demand a separate discussion.

What Mr. Adams understood by the word "abandon" I do not know, but all mention of the plot of 1804 ceases with that year. Moreover, there is no evidence whatever of any plot or plan of separation of any kind in 1807 and 1808. As Mr. Adams asserts the existence of a plot at that time, the burden of proof is with him to support his affirmative;

but he offers no evidence except his own letters, and a statement that he had heard of the existence of such a plot. That he heard a great many loud and violent denunciations of the government, and fervent wishes for separation expressed with equal violence and loudness, is undoubted. He had but to look in the papers to read them, or go upon the street to hear them, or talk with his new party allies to have them enlarged and described. But angry political talk is not a plot, nor are newspaper articles a plan, nor the assertions of enemies a scheme. I have sought with the aid of much material, to which Mr. Adams had no access, to substantiate his statement; and I have sought in vain. There is not a shred of evidence that there was any plot outside of the busy brain of Colonel Pickering, if it existed at that time even there. Talk of secession there was in great abundance, and even resolutions by towns, and suggestions by individuals that it would be well to take active measures; but there was no plot, no combination, no definite proposal even on the part of the leaders. This is the fair deduction from Mr. Adams's own evidence; this is the united testimony of all the letters of the day; and this, in the utter absence of all rebutting evidence, must be considered as the exact truth.

We cannot wonder, however, that Mr. Adams, convinced of the existence of a scheme of dissolution in 1804, should have firmly believed in its revival in 1807–8. The signs of the times certainly authorized such a belief. The air was full of threats and demands for separation, produced as might have been expected, and as was always the case, by real or fancied injuries inflicted upon the minority by the dominant party; and, in this instance, the injuries were only too real. The letters in this volume are alone sufficient to carry conviction of the sufferings, the miseries of the Eastern States. The embargo had fallen like a withering curse upon New England. Under its desolating blight, her ships rotted at their wharves, her

business stagnated, her industries were paralyzed, and her laboring population was thrown out of work. Ruin confronted her merchants, poverty and starvation stared her working men in the face. Yet they were expected to tamely endure all this wretchedness, because a Virginian planter said that in this way commerce was defended, and the national dignity protected. In vain did the men of New England beg to have arms, to be allowed even the privilege of arming themselves. In vain did they urge that, if commerce were left free, they would defend it, and would see to it that the national honor did not suffer. They were told that this would lead to war, and they were not to be permitted to even shed their own blood. Men still remembered the day when Massachusetts had, single-handed, resisted England; they had never known their State to fail them; they were proud of their traditions; and they turned, as every American then did in the hour of trouble, to their State for the relief which the general government could not or would not give. Not only did men cry out against the government of Jefferson, but they made no secret of their desire for separation from a union which seemed ruinous. Far worse than this were the immediate dangers which lurked behind the distress of the lower orders. The wisest men justly feared lest there should be tumults and insurrections.

In such a condition of affairs, the hour had surely come for those men whose sole object was to dissolve the Union. The Federalist leaders were skilful politicians, and by a little management might readily have brought their tenderly cherished plans, as imputed to them by Mr. Adams, to fulfilment. In the midst of popular tumult, the plan of secession would have found ready adherence. Yet these very men deprecated and dreaded tumult. They strained every nerve to bring about in a legitimate manner the repeal of the embargo, the very measure that was surest to cause a dissolution of the Union, if persisted in. They

encouraged every form of legal opposition; and their most distinguished lawyer argued in court against it, while the juries refused to convict under it, and their writers and speakers strenuously denounced it. In other words, the men who aimed at a dissolution of the Union sought to overthrow the very measure by which dissolution was hastened. Had they really wished a separation, they would not have opposed the measure constitutionally, but by open resistance. The path was an easy and a sure one, for one violence would have led to another. But the Federalists did not seek a dissolution of the Union for its own sake. They were not even prepared, in 1808, to use it as a threat in order to force those alterations which they deemed essential to the preservation of union. On the contrary, they were content to seek the desired changes by the regular and recognized methods of the Constitution. They did all in their power to render abortive the strongest incentive to dissolution; and so anxious were some of them to succeed in their opposition to the embargo, that Mr. Cabot urged upon the Federal convention the necessity of disclaiming all sympathy with schemes of separation, in order that they might obtain the confidence of the whole country.[1] Surely no men, bent on bringing about secession, would have sought, as a preliminary measure, to strengthen mutual confidence among the different States. Sectional animosity would have been the one thing they would have wished to cultivate. Mr. Adams believed Colonel Pickering's letter to Sullivan to be the preconcerted signal for the commencement of a separatist movement; whereas the correspondence with Mr. Cabot on this subject shows that no idea of this sort existed, but that, on the contrary, the letter was chiefly directed against the embargo, and to break down the Republican party in Massachusetts. Moreover, Mr. Cabot strove to suppress further pamphlets as prejudicial to party success in the general government, rather than to stimulate

[1] See above, p. 398.

the controversy. In support of the second and third of Mr. Adams's charges, therefore, there is no proof beyond his own assertion; and he may well have been misled in making them by the circumstances of the time. All the evidence points exactly the other way; and, although it can hardly ever be said that a negative in a matter of this sort has been proved, it may be safely asserted that, in the face of the opposing testimony, Mr. Adams's unsupported allegation falls to the ground. The New England Federalists, in 1807-8, did not form any plan or combination for a dissolution of the Union, but, on the contrary, took steps which led to the opposite result. They behaved, moreover, in the very way in which men who aimed at a dissolution would not have behaved. There was, no doubt, much talk, both in public and private, about secession and a New England convention,[1] as well as much vigorous denunciation of the general government. This was known before, and this is all that the hitherto unpublished correspondence of their most prominent leaders reveals. Mr. Cabot's correspondence at this time with Colonel Pickering, with whom he was on the most confidential terms, discloses their views with the greatest freedom; and it has been given here with perfect fulness. No trace is to be found of a plan of separation like that of 1804, and the rest of the Pickering correspondence is equally barren. There may have been plots of that kind, of which not only Colonel Pickering and Mr. Cabot, but all Colonel Pickering's correspondents, were wholly unaware. But this is a violent inference; and I doubt if even Mr. Adams would have ventured to say that a secession scheme existed in New England, from all knowledge of which both Colonel Pickering and Mr. Cabot were excluded. I am unable to carry further a refutation of Mr. Adams's second and third propositions, because I am offering negative proof which cannot in its nature be final. But, until direct affirmative proof of some sort is brought forward, I think

[1] See Colonel Pickering's first letter to Sullivan. Also Otis to Quincy, below, p. 492.

it must be admitted that there was no Federalist scheme of secession in 1807–8, and that the leaders did not then or at any previous time desire a dissolution, as in itself a good and advantageous event.

The fourth charge made against the Federalists by Mr. Adams of treasonable communication with Great Britain is much graver than the two preceding ones. Fortunately, it is more specific and more easily met. Mr. Adams has supported this accusation by what he seems to consider good testimony. I had expected from the language of Mr. Adams's pamphlet to find evidence of the strongest and most damning kind, which would render the charge at least highly probable; and I confess to great surprise when I found myself confronted by the familiar form of John Henry, and by nothing else. The statutes both of England and of Massachusetts require, in order to convict of treason, two witnesses; and here there is but one, unsworn and testifying nothing. By the letters of a spy who sneaked into the houses of gentlemen and saw nothing, of an informer who had no information to give, of a creature who sold his own baseness and ignorance for a sum of money, Mr. Adams seeks to establish a charge of treason and of communication with a foreign government against men of honorable lives and high reputation. The mere mention of Henry's character ought to be enough to impeach his testimony, were it ever so direct. But only the most ingenious twisting can give even a color of meaning to his vague statements, while the rebutting evidence is overwhelming. The Federalists never sought to deny Henry's charges. They treated them as too contemptibly ridiculous to deserve notice. A few words suffice to tell the whole story. John Henry was an English adventurer, who had married an American lady of good social position. Being without employment, he suggested to the governor-general of Canada that he should be employed to gather in the United States information which might be of advantage to English interests. He was therefore commissioned by Sir James Craig, the governor of Canada, to carry out this meritorious

plan. He went to Boston, where, thanks to his marriage and his letters of introduction, he was admitted to the best houses.[1] At the dinner-tables in Boston, he probably heard a good deal of loose talk about separation, as well as strong expressions of sympathy with Great Britain. The information he obtained amounted merely to this: that in his opinion, if war were declared against England, there would probably be a congress of the Eastern States and a dissolution of the Union. If this were to happen, Henry thought that a treaty with Great Britain would follow, but what connection would come with that country, he said, "no person was prepared to describe." This was all he learned, absolutely all, — the unknown results of a contingency. He had but to read the papers or talk with the gentlemen at whose houses he dined, to get the information on which he based such an opinion. He offered nothing but an opinion, a mere conjecture as to what might happen in certain events. He did not even say that such things would happen, but merely that such was his opinion, if war were declared, which he did not think probable. In his first letter from Boston, he says he has not discovered himself to any one, but that he is able to judge of the proper time for mentioning an alliance with Great Britain; and there is no trace in subsequent letters that he ever changed in this respect. The only possible inference is that he never did discover himself, and there is not a vestige of proof which would lead to an opposite conclusion. The utmost that he says in regard to the opinions of the Federalists is that the men of talents and property preferred separation to war with Great Britain and alliance with France. That this had been the view of many leading Federalists for a number of years is now well known. Their one absorbing fear was that the independence of the country would be sacrificed, and that under the specious name of alliance they would fall beneath the dominion of Bonaparte, and go to war

[1] See Quincy's Life of Josiah Quincy, p. 250.

with Great Britain as the nations of Europe had already been compelled to do. Henry, then, did not disclose himself to any one, judging by his own letters alone. Nor did he mention the name of a single individual as authority even for the views which he attributed to the Federalists, or for the opinion which he himself had formed. The committee on foreign relations, after maturely considering the awful nature of the letters for which Mr. Madison paid fifty thousand dollars, came to the conclusion that there was nothing to be done; that the letters contained no specific charges and no names, and that they implicated nobody. The committee also examined Count Crillon, a friend and companion of Henry, and extracted nothing from him but a repetition of Henry's own story. In short, there was nothing to tell. Henry told all he could; for there were no motives for concealment except a sense of honor, which it would be a gross absurdity to impute to a spy. If Henry had names to sell, we may be sure that they would have had their price, and that he would have sold them. The only person in Massachusetts connected by name with Henry was Governor Gerry, who gave him a letter of introduction to the President. From the evidence, therefore, of Mr. Adams's only witness in support of his charge, it appears that Henry never disclosed himself as an agent of the British government to any one, that he could tell nothing that was not known before, and that he did not name or even indirectly implicate a single individual. The British government disowned him, and refused him money; and the new governor of Canada would do nothing for him. This, be it remembered, was before he discovered himself. Never an accredited agent of England, he was angered at the coldness with which he was treated. But Henry was an acute observer of American politics; and he knew that the mere fact of his having acted as a British spy in New England would be a valuable political cry to the administration. He therefore sold himself to Mr. Madison, who paid an

enormous sum, with the very simple object of exciting anew the popular hatred of England. This was an old party trick; and perhaps we can hardly wonder that Mr. Madison should have again employed it, and have cared little, if by his actions he should succeed in fixing an odious stigma upon his opponents and upon the States in which they lived, although he roused thereby sectional hatreds at a moment when war was impending and Union all important. In fact, Henry makes a sorry witness in the cold, clear light of the present day; and his testimony, in itself of no importance, shows absolutely nothing that cannot be better known without it.

We are now in a position to consider external evidence, though it is merely cumulative in its nature; for Henry is his own all-sufficient refutation. The Federalists knew him when he was in Boston: he went to their houses, and mixed freely with them. There is, however, no mention of his name, as far as I am aware, in any of the Federalist correspondence before Mr. Madison's disclosures in 1811. The Pickering letters published and unpublished, the Quincy letters, the letters of Mr. Cabot, all are silent before that date as to the existence of such a person as Henry. His visit was evidently not deemed of importance by any of those whom he met in Boston. Even when he made his disclosures, the Federalists gave the matter but little attention, and treated it as a mere device of the enemy. I cannot close this brief account of the Henry episode more fitly than with the words of one of the very few men who in that period of bitter political feeling kept his temper, his judgment, and his power of cool observation unimpaired. Judge Peters writes to Colonel Pickering, on March 18, 1812: —

"I have read the mighty communications by the President of Henry's espionage. I think it a most pitiful electioneering manœuvre, and I am ashamed of my old friend's[1] push for popularity.

[1] Mr. Madison.

Nevertheless, it will have no small effect among those on whom it is intended to operate. Some of our politicians wonder at the folly of publishing by authority libels on the Democrats.[1] But every thing said by Henry will be attributed to British enmity and hatred of the only true and immaculate patriots. This will keep up resentment, and drive the wavering into the old phalanx embodied against the English and Anglo-Federalists. All sufferings by anti-commercial measures will be forgot for the moment, and the frenzy will have its effect before reason, among those who have any, can resume its seat. I think the price of his trash for any good purpose would be high at forty-eight dollars. Whether as the newspapers allege forty-eight thousand have been paid, I cannot pretend to know or believe."

"If the old humor produced among you suggested serious determination to separate from the Union, your good sense would have deterred you from trusting yourselves in the hands of such a plenipotentiary."

The letter from which I have made these extracts goes on to speak of Henry's attempt at negotiation as at once foolish and impracticable, and with this judicial summing up of the whole affair we may be content to leave the subject.

Henry's mission took place in 1809 and his disclosures in 1812, so that in dealing with the case I have been obliged to anticipate the order of events. But before leaving Mr. Adams's charge of British influence, the evidence of which I have tried to consider, it seems not inappropriate to still further refute his accusations, by citing in their own words the opinions of the Federalists on the political situation in 1807–8. I have already endeavored to describe their convictions that the embargo was a wicked and dangerous measure, that England was fighting for the liberties of mankind, and that war with her was the greatest of all possible evils, entailing, as they believed it must, an alliance with France and a servile submission to Bonaparte. They sym-

[1] The greater part of the Henry letters consisted of keen and well-directed criticisms on the party and the policy of the Democrats.

pathized far too strongly with England; but the bane of foreign politics had fallen upon the whole country, and they were far from being the most conspicuous examples of the evil effects of outside influences. The New England Federalists preferred a separation to an English war; but in their hatred of the embargo, and in their sympathy for England, they were in full accord with their party friends elsewhere. If opinions of this last sort were treasonable, as was freely said at the time, there can be no doubt of their guilt. Colonel Pickering's and Mr. Cabot's views have already been given in full; and the next, therefore, which I shall quote will be those of John Marshall, for his sympathy with England differed but little from that felt by those men whom Mr. Adams stigmatized as Tories and a British faction.

MARSHALL TO PICKERING.

RICHMOND, Dec. 19, 1808.

MY DEAR SIR, — I thank you very sincerely for the excellent speeches[1] lately delivered in the Senate, which you have been so obliging as to transmit me. If sound argument and correct reasoning could save our country, it would be saved. Nothing can be more completely demonstrated than the inefficacy of the embargo, yet that demonstration seems to be of no avail. I fear most seriously that the same spirit which so tenaciously maintains this measure will impel us to a war with the only power which protects any part of the civilized world from the despotism of that tyrant with whom we shall then be arranged.

You have shown that the principle commonly called the rule of 1756 is of much earlier date, and, I fear, have also shown to what motives the embargo is to be traced.

But I abstain from remarks on this question. With great and sincere esteem, I am, dear sir,

Your obedient J. MARSHALL.

Mr. Stoddert, John Adams's Secretary of the Navy, writes on Dec. 6, 1809: —

[1] On the embargo.

"I see by Mr. Giles's inflammatory resolutions that there are men who mean to second the views disclosed by the cabinet to bring on a war with England, which can only end in open and acknowledged submission to the rule of France."

"I am not now singular in the hope that you will now save it from a war that would be more fatal than a civil war."

Dec. 19, 1808, James Ross, of Pennsylvania, writes: —

"Such is the condition of the Old World that, unless we resolutely and speedily change our national habits and character, unless we assume a military instead of a negotiating, temporizing policy, we are undone. To be safe from wanton insult and attack, we must be armed on the ocean and on the land. . . . I have considered the embargo as a trick, a mere nickname, devised by the President to conceal the real design and object of the cabinet, which was in effect to comply with the demands of Bonaparte, and to shut our ports against English commerce on this side of the Atlantic, while he compelled all Europe to do the same."

John Jay says, in thanking Pickering for copies of the latter's speeches: —

"On reading your speech, I observe sentiments which manifest your esteem and demand my acknowledgments. It is desirable that no errors be permitted to prevail either in present or future relative to the inducements and objects of the embargo, or relative to the consequences resulting from it. A full, fair, and able exposition of the origin and progress of our national embarrassments would be useful."

Charles Carroll of Carrollton, who survived all the other signers of the Declaration of Independence, says (Dec. 31, 1808): —

"The antipathy of this man [Jefferson] to England, and his predilection for France, passions of which his successor strongly partakes, will, I fear, ruin our country."

Mr. Carroll attributed the embargo to the dictates of Bonaparte, who in his opinion aimed at nothing short of universal dominion. His letter continues: —

"I have no predilection for England nor antipathy to France; but the former I wish success in the present war, because that success will establish the liberties of Europe and the independence of our own country, now in jeopardy."

Rufus King writes to Colonel Pickering, Jan. 15, 1809: —

"I beg of you to thank Mr. Hillhouse, in my behalf, for his useful and constitutional speech in opposition to Mr. Giles's oppressive and tyrannical bill to enforce the embargo. These measures may be borne for a time, but they cannot be of long duration. You will have seen the proceedings of a numerous meeting in this city."

Mr. King thoroughly sympathized with England in the midst of the struggle which, as he says elsewhere, "was changing the face of the world."

The public declarations of the Federalists were no less explicit, not only in their opposition to the embargo, but in their firm adherence to the naval policy and neutrality of Washington. Mr. Quincy, in an eloquent speech (November, 1808), after declaring the embargo to be a practical submission to both belligerents, said: —

"But to my eye the path of our duty is as distinct as the milky way, — all studded with living sapphires and glowing with cumulating light. It is the path of active preparation, of dignified energy. *It is the path of* 1776. It consists not in abandoning our rights, but in supporting them, as they exist, and where they exist, — *on the ocean as well as on the land.* It consists in taking the nature of things as the measure of the rights of your citizens, not the orders and decrees of imperious foreigners. Give what protection you can. Take no counsel of fear. Your strength will increase with the trial, and prove greater than you are now aware."

About the same time, Mr. Lloyd had said in the Senate: —

"Remove the embargo, authorize the merchants to arm their vessels, put the nation in a state of defence, and assert your well-established and indisputable rights, or perish in the contest."

An earnest letter from Mr. H. G. Otis to Mr. Quincy, upon the speech from which I have quoted, shows how thoroughly in sympathy the latter was with the leaders at home. The suggestion, in the same letter, of a convention "to provide some mode of relief [from the embargo] that may not be *inconsistent with the union of these States*," is indicative not only of the misery which the system of maritime restrictions had already brought, but shows exactly how far Mr. Adams's "plot" had proceeded. Harassed and nearly ruined by the embargo, threatened by riot and domestic insurrection, the Federalists discussed extreme measures. This letter of Mr. Otis goes further than any other at this time; but there is very little plot about it, and certainly nothing like combination.

In the same year (1808), the Legislature of Massachusetts passed resolutions, in which they avowed themselves ready to bear every privation of war, although believing a peace policy to be the true one, and begged earnestly for an efficient navy. This is not the language of timidity, of fanatical lovers of peace, nor of Tory sympathizers. If such opposition as this frustrated Mr. Jefferson's longing for a sterner and more warlike policy, he must have labored under a sad misapprehension as to his opponents' real wishes.

Extracts might be multiplied from the writings of the New England Federalists, expressing views identical with those just quoted. But the latter are sufficient to give an exact and truthful picture of Federalist opinion at this time, and to enable us to compare it with the policy of the administration which they resisted and opposed. Such a comparison would be the surest and most complete vindication of the Federalists that could be devised. It would justify the motto proposed for their convention in Pennsylvania, "Union, peace, and no foreign alliance."[1]

The new year (1809) opened with the passage of the

[1] Letter from Abraham Shepherd, in Pickering MSS.

enforcing act, a measure capable of leading to the greatest tyranny, oppression, and fraud. To the suffering people of New England, it was the last straw. We read of a town meeting in Boston demanding that the Legislature should resist the enforcing act; and we cannot but recall another meeting of the same town fifty years before, when, under the guidance of Samuel Adams, the representatives were instructed to resist the first attempt to tax America. Lincoln, upon whom the office of governor devolved at Sullivan's death, deprecated in his speech at the opening of the session the hostility of New England to the new measures, and also the threats of secession now growing louder and louder. A committee, headed by Mr. Gore, brought in a report which took advanced Federalist ground against the French and the embargo and in favor of England. The committee said: —

"Let Congress repeal the embargo, annul the convention with France, forbid all commercial intercourse with the French dominions, arm our public and private ships, and unfurl the republican banner against the imperial standard."

The answers of both Houses to the governor were in a similar strain. Any idea of a dissolution of the Union was disclaimed, but it was intimated very distinctly that the embargo and its adjuncts were not laws. Both Houses denounced the enforcing act, as in many respects "oppressive, unconstitutional, and not legally binding;" but they advised peaceable and legal resistance. At the same time, they passed a bill prohibiting the search of dwelling-houses authorized by the enforcing act, just as a former Massachusetts assembly had passed a bill to limit the operation of writs of assistance. The ships hung their flags at half-mast when the commandant at the fort received orders to allow none of them to leave the harbor, and the Legislature resisted the use of the militia by Lincoln to enforce the obnoxious laws. Fresh threats were heard from the town,

and the voice of Randolph recalled to Jefferson the fate of Lord North. Now, too, did Mr. Adams, by letter and by word of mouth, warn his new allies against the evil designs of his friends and fellow-citizens. Exaggerated and distorted by suspicion as this warning was, it came none too soon. The spirit of resistance was rising fast in New England; and, had it once broken loose, no man could have tamed it. Behind the legal and stubborn opposition of the Legislature lurked possibilities of secession and civil war, and they were each moment coming nearer and growing more distinct. The people of Massachusetts had in former times thrown Andros into prison and risen against Hutchinson for oppression but little heavier than that from which they now suffered. They would have been unworthy of their race, and contemptible as men, had they not been ready to fight when they honestly believed themselves intolerably wronged. They intended to exhaust every form of legal opposition; and, if that did not avail, they were ready to draw the sword. This was the spirit which, rightly or wrongly directed, has always made the English race respected and respectable; and this was the spirit which was abroad in New England, in 1809. Moreover, the contagion was spreading. Other States were passing out of the control of the Democracy. All men save one saw that not only political change, but the ruin of the country was imminent, if the embargo policy should be persisted in. But, although the President would not abandon his theory, the dread of sure destruction now proved stronger with the faithful majority than the word of their master. The Northern Republicans, influenced by the great abilities of Story, that "pseudo-Republican," as Jefferson in the bittterness of his heart afterwards called him, gave ground; their Southern allies were demoralized; the Federalists pressed the assault, the great majority gave way in all directions, the embargo was repealed, and Jefferson defeated. He mourned over this as a fatal measure,

yet he was not without compensating successes. The navy appropriation was very small, and the army bill was defeated. At least, the country was so completely unarmed that, even if the removal of the embargo were to lead to war, but little fighting could be done; for there were no weapons. The closing days of Jefferson's administration present a wretched spectacle. The party had broken from their leader's cherished policy, and neither he nor they had any other to suggest. A frantic objection to doing any thing that by any possibility could lead to war was the one distinct notion among the Democrats; and so, after much heated and futile wrangling, Congress finally passed Mr. Madison's feeble non-intercourse bill, ingeniously contrived to be perfectly ineffective and yet thoroughly irritating. With this measure, Jefferson's second term came to an end.

Mr. Madison succeeded to a terrible task. His predecessor had so hopelessly entangled every thing that it is doubtful if a Cromwell or a Richelieu could ever have unravelled the knots, but that Mr. Madison was wholly unable to do so is perfectly clear. The last hours of Jefferson's official life had been clouded with defeat; yet, could he have shaken off his delusions, he might have resumed his former sway. For Mr. Madison, on the other hand, to assert and maintain the leadership of his disorganized party was an impossibility. The magic touch, the delicate management, the light, firm hand, had departed with Jefferson; and the Democratic party dragged their new chief helplessly at the wheels of his own chariot. In dealing with these new conditions, the Federalists made a great, a capital mistake. They assumed that Mr. Madison had succeeded not only to all the insignia, but to all the real power, and to all the principles of his illustrious predecessor; and they threw all responsibility upon him for every party measure, as they had formerly done upon Jefferson. Nothing could have been more erroneous or more unjust than such a course, and it was of evil consequence to those who adhered to it.

Mr. Madison was in truth a Federalist at heart and by temperament, and he was ever a moderate, wise, and conciliatory man. He now found himself at the head of a broken and disorganized party, with a powerful and increasing opposition to his policy among his followers. Had the Federalists but taken advantage of his difficulties in the proper way, they might have obtained a controlling position, and, with the help of conservative Democrats, have beaten off the war party, now rising into prominence. They were unluckily too much blinded by the fierce party spirit of the times to see plainly their opportunity, yet in the first months of the new administration it seemed quite probable that they and Mr. Madison might come together for mutual support. This deceitful hope was excited by the Erskine negotiation. Mr. Erskine was a sincere friend to this country, and most desirous to heal the differences existing with England. He presented certain conditions demanded by Mr. Canning as essential preliminaries to a negotiation; and our government accepted these conditions, but with such limitations that Erskine was obliged to overstep his instructions, in order to go on with the treaty. This he did, however; and the preliminary arrangement was signed, and sent to England. Canning, with the short-sighted and brutal arrogance of which he was at times capable, took advantage of Erskine's violation of his instructions, and refused a ratification to what had been done. Such impolitic action on the part of England set every thing adrift again. The non-intercourse act was renewed; and the Federalists, who had come round toward the support of Mr. Madison, at the news of the successful negotiations now rushed again into bitter opposition. Again they called Mr. Madison the disciple of Jefferson, the admirer of France, the man who would not make peace with England on any terms. Here, too, they blundered politically, and were unjust to their opponent. Mr. Madison's policy was, in conception at least, a wise and intelligent one. He wished, if possible, to make peace

with England; but he was determined that, if the negotiations broke down, the blame of failure should rest upon England alone. Had he behaved in a perfectly straightforward way, this plan would have been successful; but, while he neither accepted nor refused the conditions proposed by Erskine, he drew the British minister on to make concessions clearly unwarranted by the instructions. This slight tinge of duplicity gave ground to his enemies to say that Erskine had been disingenuously treated, and that peace was not really desired. So the bitter antagonism flamed up more fiercely than ever; and the failure of Erskine's successor, Jackson, and his quarrels with the administration, gave fresh reasons for suspicion and distrust. Mr. Madison was meantime pressed by difficulties on the other side. Turreau, the French minister, addressed to our government a letter, warning us to desist from the Erskine negotiation, and so dictatorial and insulting in its language that it rouses a keen feeling of shame and indignation even now. Mr. Madison swallowed the affront with the best grace he could, and said but little as to the French outrages and seizures of vessels, which were now renewed in great abundance. Silence also was preserved as to Cadore's infamous letter to Armstrong, commanding us to go to war with England under pain of the Emperor's displeasure. The President's tameness under the abuse of France showed him to be still hampered by the maxims of Jefferson, and destroyed the faint belief of the Federalists in his freedom from French influence. Mr. Madison was himself to blame for all this, and his feeble conduct under French aggressions laid him fairly open to the really undeserved imputation of being a French sympathizer. That the impression of his servility towards Bonaparte was generally diffused among even temperate men by his conduct appears from a letter of John Marshall to Mr. Quincy. The Chief Justice says: —

"I had supposed the late letter to Mr. Armstrong, and the late seizure of an American vessel, simply because she was an Ameri-

can, added to previous burnings, ransoms, and confiscations, would have exhausted to the dregs our cup of servility and degradation; but these measures appear to make no impression on those to whom the United States confide their destinies. To what point are we verging?"[1]

When Congress came together, although Mr. Madison was fully supported in his treatment of Mr. Jackson, disorganization was very apparent in the ranks of the old Jeffersonian phalanx. The restrictive commercial policy no longer found eager support, and even the Federalist doctrine of free commerce met with more acceptance, while Mr. Gallatin's navigation act was ultimately defeated.

From this time until the actual declaration of war, our unhappy President and his administration plunged from one difficulty into another, and every fresh effort to extricate the country only served to sink it deeper. A breach in the English cabinet, and the favorable disposition of Lord Wellesley, afforded a momentary gleam of hope and an opportunity to renew negotiation. But even this distant prospect of relief was darkened by the increased number and insolence of the French seizures and by the publication of the Rambouillet decree, which seemed to achieve the impossible by inflicting fresh injury on our already shattered neutral rights. Although Mr. Pinkney's negotiation with the new cabinet failed, yet the opening of our ports led to a revival of trade at which England connived, and a better state of feeling was generally apparent. The French government were alarmed, fearing that their hold upon the United States was loosening; and they therefore ingeniously took measures to entrap us into an open conflict with Great Britain. Bonaparte offered to withdraw his decrees, on condition that we should insist on England's withdrawal of the orders in council. He had not in reality, we may be sure, the slightest intention of revoking his decrees, but merely wished to induce us to make proposals

[1] See Quincy's Life of Josiah Quincy, p. 204.

to England when we had no security that our offers would be made good. He desired to make us a go-between, to force us into the position of bargaining in the French interest, and then, by a simple refusal to carry out the promises he authorized us to offer, to make England reject our overtures, and to leave us embroiled in a hopeless quarrel with his one opponent. The ruse was only too successful. Mr. Madison, entirely deceived by the lies of the French Emperor, blundered head-first into the snare, and found himself engaged with a third party in a quarrel about French interests. At the news of the French propositions, the Federalists took strong ground against them, urging that only the wildest folly would consent to risk our British trade for the sake of French privileges, which, even if really given, were well-nigh worthless. All opposition, however, was vain. Mr. Madison persisted in his attempt to coerce England by means of the French decrees, which he assisted by a proclamation reviving the non-importation act in all its old severity and injustice. When Randolph proposed the repeal of the act, he was told that it was a pledge to France. Yet, at the very time that we were thus sacrificing our interests to those of Bonaparte, our vessels were still seized by his ships, and condemned in his courts; and Serrurier, the new French minister, did not bring to Washington even an offer of indemnity for all the injuries of our faithless ally. Even such grossly outrageous conduct on the part of France could not undeceive Mr. Madison. By way of showing confidence in the French, new and stricter clauses were added to the non-importation act; and Robert Smith was forced from the cabinet, not merely because he was incompetent, as Mr. Madison very rightly asserted, but also because he failed to comprehend the policy, and would insist that the Emperor never meant to recall the decrees.[1] While Mr. Madison was thus exhibiting, in appearance at least, fresh proofs of

[1] See Smith's Address to the People of the United States, 1811; also Address, with Pickering's Review, 1812; and Answer to Address, &c., 1812.

faith in France, the English, who had no confidence in French promises, refused to trust to them, even when offered by us. The result, of course, was the failure of the negotiation and the return of Pinkney. He was soon followed by the new British envoy, Mr. Augustus Foster, the prospects of whose mission were not brightened by the affair of the "President" and the "Little Belt." Mr. Madison, however, accepted the reparation offered by Foster for the "Chesapeake" affair, which was identical in terms with that scornfully rejected by Jefferson four years previously. Nevertheless, the negotiation did not proceed. To Foster's request, that on the revocation of the British orders we should peremptorily demand the withdrawal of the French decrees, Mr. Madison replied that we could not dictate to France. This was no doubt perfectly true, but we had made no difficulty when the French requested a similar attempt on our part at dictation to England.

But however perilous our foreign relations, a more certain sign of coming conflict was to be found in the rise to influence and power of the new war party. The members of this new faction were principally drawn from the great Democratic majority, but they were men of very different stuff from those who had followed so long at the heels of Mr. Jefferson. Their principal support came from the rude population of the interior and backwoods settlements. Their leaders were, for the most part, young, rough, untrained, and impetuous. They brought with them all that wonderful power of blatant self-glorification, which for so many years after made our nation ridiculous, and which is only just now passing into well-deserved contempt. They were at first about as fit to deal with delicate questions of foreign or domestic policy as an Ashantee savage with a chronometer watch, or a Patagonian Indian with a microscope. But they represented a new phase and a real force in our politics, and they represented them truly. Their coming signified that the old *régime* was over, that our poli-

tics and our politicians were henceforth to be as democratic as our principles. They were the sign that we were really democratic altogether, and they represented a new departure in all the departments and in the character of public life. In 1811, they appeared to the members of the old parties violent, strange, and abnormal, for their coming marked an era in our history: they absorbed the vital principles of both their predecessors, and they fastened them finally and surely on our body politic. These new men were thoroughly imbued with the national spirit, with a sense of national honor; and they were ready to fight, as the only method they understood for vindicating their dignity. They were the first to fully represent the work of nationality which the union of twenty-five years had silently effected; and they were the first men free enough from tradition to offer some definite plan, instead of the never-ending juggling of Jefferson and the timid hesitation of Madison. The forces which brought the war party into sudden prominence were natural as well as powerful, although it is unfortunate that their representatives were absolutely ignorant of state-craft, and manifested their wishes and exercised their power with roughness and brutality. One thing was clear to them: if foreign nations did not treat the United States better, then the United States must fight. Unluckily, their next definite idea was that the only proper country to fight was England. It is true that they were ready to attack anybody; but they had been brought up under the Jeffersonian auspices, and they had a general notion that Americans could neither hate nor fight any one but an Englishman. Not content with this limited idea as to the range of selection among their opponents, they blundered into another utter misconception. Their genuine readiness for war would of itself have obtained for them all they desired, but they had determined not only to fight England, but also to fight at all events and under any conditions.

By this headlong impetuosity, although still but a

faction, they dragged the rest of their party with them. The committee on foreign relations brought in a report favoring war. The new zealots talked loudly about conquering Canada, and averred that the Canadian population would fraternize with them after the French fashion. Warlike preparations were urged. But still they were under the old spell; and, while they called for forty-five millions for an army to prosecute their schemes of invasion, they would only give to the navy a pitiful three hundred thousand dollars. Bitterly as the Federalists hated the war which was fast coming upon the country, they roused to a last struggle in behalf of the navy. They had never yielded their conviction that this was the one branch of the service on which we ought to rely; and they now made a last desperate effort to get money, that we might not enter into war with the mistress of the seas unprovided with ships and seamen. Lloyd of Massachusetts pleaded earnestly for our navy, in a speech of great force and eloquence. He said, after combating the war policy: —

"If, however, the nation is determined to fight, to make any impression on England we must have a navy. Give us thirty swift-sailing, well-appointed frigates. . . . . Give us this little fleet. Place your navy department under an able and spirited administration, cashier every officer who strikes his flag, and you will soon have a good account of your navy. This may be thought a hard tenure of service; but, hard or easy, I will engage in five weeks, yes, in five days, to officer this little fleet from New England alone."

This was the last despairing cry of the Federalists, but it fell upon deaf ears. We were to fight for seamen's rights, but seamen were to take no part; we were to contest the dominion of the seas, but only by an invasion of Canada.

Mr. Madison's position was most pitiable. Sincerely anxious for peace, distressed beyond measure at the prospect of war, he had not the courage to hold out against his own

party, or to make one more desperate effort to save the country from a ruinous conflict. He tried to remain a passive spectator, but even this the war faction would not permit. He must be their leader, he must sound the trumpet of defiance; the war must be "Mr. Madison's war." The war faction had, fortunately for themselves, one irresistible argument. The election was at hand, they had a candidate ready to accept their nomination, and Mr. Madison was obliged to decide between adopting a policy he abhorred and the loss of the Presidency.[1] He chose the former, although it was a heavy price to pay for official preferment. He did not possess that strong moral courage which carried John Adams through the trial of 1798. Mr. Adams lost the Presidency, shattered his party, and saved the country from war. Mr. Madison saved his office and his party, and precipitated the country into the war of 1812.

The first step, by way of uniting the nation and rousing its spirit, was of course to lay a new embargo; and soon after, on June 18th, war was formally declared. England made a last, unavailing effort for peace: she also allowed our vessels six weeks to leave her ports, and the obnoxious orders in council were soon after withdrawn. We went to war nominally on account of the orders in council, and of the English claim to the right of impressment. The revocation of the orders left the impressment question the sole cause for fighting. It cannot be too often insisted on, therefore, in judging the war and the war party, that we fought solely in defence of seamen's rights, and that those rights were not mentioned by the treaty of Ghent.

[1] Mr. Madison's course was very obscure. He favored peace strongly until just at the close of 1811. See Writings of Madison, II. 523. He then shifted his ground. It was freely charged and as freely denied that, just before the nominating caucus, Clay and a delegation of the war party waited on the President, and obtained his promise to declare war. An opposition candidate in the person of Clinton, and perhaps Monroe, was certainly ready; and the inference is irresistible that Madison yielded from a fear of losing the Presidency, a view which I have never seen successfully controverted. See Hildreth, VI. 289, 298.

I do not intend to trace the events of the war. It was a long succession of disasters on land and victories at sea. The grand schemes of conquering and fraternizing in Canada broke down in utter disgrace, redeemed only by the exploits of the little Federalist navy. Instead of wresting provinces from England, our disorganized and ill-led troops were thrown back on our frontier by the arms of provincial soldiery. Instead of invasion, the war became one of desperate defence; and we were compelled to see our capital ruthlessly pillaged and destroyed. The ships that France was to furnish never came. Disasters gathered around Bonaparte; and England, freed from her great foe, showed no desire to make peace with a people who had ever manifested, as she thought, the most unnatural French sympathies. All the hopes of Mr. Madison vanished as France sank, and we were left alone to cope with England. The loud boastings of the war Democrats only served to show, by their utter non-fulfilment, the ignorance and incompetence of the men who had hurried us totally unprepared into a struggle which might have been avoided. Such a war, as it progressed, was not calculated to weaken or diminish the peace party.

The Federalists in Congress, in 1812, published an address to their constituents, denouncing the declaration of war as wicked and unjustifiable; and their sentiments were largely shared by the people of New England. This feeling of hostility increased and deepened as the war went on, and was manifested, from the beginning, in the troubles between the Eastern States and the general government. The quiet but determined resistance of the State governments, on every point where they could interpose a legal obstacle, caused the administration to treat them with marked disfavor; and demands which were readily acceded to in the case of turbulent Democratic States were rudely refused to Massachusetts and Connecticut. No attempt at conciliation was made, and the breach between the Federal-

ist States and the Democratic administration widened daily. The merits of their quarrels can be more fitly discussed when the report of the Hartford Convention is reached, and we may therefore proceed at once to consider the history and composition of that body.

When the Legislature of Massachusetts met in 1814, the condition of affairs, both State and national, was gloomy in the extreme. But their own condition was the first thought in the minds of the Massachusetts representatives. The war had gone from bad to worse. The little navy which had done so much had disappeared. Our flag no longer waved over a single national vessel. The ravages of the British on our coasts, culminating in the destruction of Washington, were relieved only by an occasional stubborn and successful defence of some isolated point. One British expedition was on its way to New Orleans, while another was preparing to attack the coast of New England, whose shores, by the withdrawal of the national troops, were left utterly defenceless. The national treasury was bankrupt; specie payments had ceased; and the administration was urging upon Congress the adoption of measures of a dangerous and oppressive character, in order to recruit our army and navy. The negotiations, at the last accounts, were most unpromising; and a conviction of the insincerity of the administration made men believe that all efforts for peace would be fruitless. The Federalists were determined, therefore, to do two things. They were resolved to protect their own shores, which the administration either could not or would not defend from foreign invasion; and they were equally resolved that they would compel the general government to make peace. With these objects in view, they determined to call a convention of the New England States, in order

"To devise, if practicable, means of security and defence which may be consistent with the preservation of their resources from total ruin, and adapted to their local situation, mutual relations, and

habits, and *not repugnant to their obligations as members of the Union.*"[1]

Connecticut and Rhode Island responded to this invitation, and appointed delegates whose instructions conformed to the terms of the Massachusetts circular. The Convention assembled at Hartford, Dec. 15, 1814. There were present twelve delegates from Massachusetts, seven from Connecticut, four from Rhode Island, and subsequently two from New Hampshire and one from Vermont, the three last representing local conventions.

This was the body which, according to Mr. Adams, was a band of adroit conspirators, residing in Boston, who misled and deceived the people, had no real popular support, represented nobody but themselves, and sought only their own advancement and the gratification of their own ambition. Let us see how nearly the Convention corresponded in character and in fact with this description.

Among the members of the Convention were men who had been distinguished in the Senate of the United States, and who had also proved the confidence reposed in them by their neighbors by the State offices which many of them had held. Among them were eminent judges, able lawyers, and wealthy merchants. They were all men of mature age and wide experience. Many of them had served the country during the administrations of Washington and Adams, while all were of high social position, and had much at stake in the well-being of the country. Honored by public trusts, they were all respected by the communities in which they lived for their private lives and characters. The Hartford Convention was eminently a conservative, honorable, respectable, and experienced body, when tried by the characters of its members; and this is certainly not the material from which conspirators and revolutionists are usually made.

The leaders of the Convention undoubtedly came from

[1] The italics are my own.

the metropolis of New England, but the members represented all sections in their several States. If this body did not fairly represent a portion of the people of New England, for the sake of the latter, it is to be much regretted. But such was not the case, for they represented a majority of the people of their respective States; and to say that under our system a convention of this sort could meet, if disapproved by the people at large, is of itself a gross absurdity. The assertion arises from the natural inconsistency which leads an opponent not only to savagely attack his enemy, but to insist that that enemy is of no importance, and one to whose actions the world is wholly indifferent. The assailant in such cases rarely perceives that the severity of the attack is of itself proof of the magnitude of the object assailed. But the exact position of the Convention in this respect can be shown in a moment by an analysis of the popular vote for governor at the preceding elections. In the year 1812, Governor Strong, the Federalist candidate, was chosen by a slender majority of 1,370 votes. The next year Strong's majority was 13,974; and in 1814, although the Democratic candidate was the distinguished Federalist, Samuel Dexter, Strong received a majority of 10,421. The resolution ordering the Convention passed the House in the Massachusetts Legislature by a vote of 260 to 90, and the delegates were afterwards chosen by the Houses in convention by a vote of 226 to 67.[1] In Connecticut, of course, the Federalist and Convention majority was much larger. In the face of these simple figures, the charge that the Hartford Convention represented nobody drops to the ground. They represented their respective States and a large majority of the people in those States, and their actions were the actions of the States and of the people of

[1] The total vote only represents about half the members of the Legislature. If all had been present, there is no reason to suppose that the relations between the votes of the majority and minority would have been altered. The Federal majority was very large.

the States. Mr. Adams was particularly excited on this point, because Mr. Otis had claimed that the Convention represented all the virtue and intelligence of New England. Such a claim is manifestly absurd in behalf of any political party. But it has led Mr. Adams into a glowing account of the size and virtue of the Republican minority in Massachusetts in 1814, and also into an eloquent defence of minority rights. Such rights need defence. But, if the Federalists dragged their States and large numbers of their reluctant fellow-citizens into the Hartford Convention by means of a numerical majority, how did Mr. Madison involve the country in war, bankruptcy, and danger of dissolution, if not by a tyrannical majority. If the voice of the majority was the voice of God at Washington, why by parity of reasoning was it not the divine command in Massachusetts? In the one case, Mr. Adams represents that the Federalists behaved with high-handed and flagrant disregard of the rights of the minority; while, in the other, the minority not only had no rights, but their opinions in favor of peace were gross treachery to their country. There would seem to be a rule here which does not work both ways; and I introduce this instance, in order to show the arbitrary laws of criticism by which it has been customary to try the Hartford Convention.

Having considered whom the Hartford Convention represented, we can now discuss its objects and intentions. These according to Mr. Adams were to gratify the ambition of certain leaders by carrying through the never-abandoned plan of a dissolution of the Union. Mr. Adams sustains his view by a long and ingenious interpretation of the report. I shall content myself here with stating the essential points in the report, and by giving all the external evidence I have been able to collect as to the objects and intentions of the Convention and its members. But first a word may be said as to the journal of the Convention. Mr. Adams intimates, and it has been freely charged elsewhere, that this

journal was not a full account of the proceedings it professed to record. The testimony on this point is direct and simple. When the document was deposited in the Secretary's office in Boston, it was accompanied by a certificate as follows: —

I, George Cabot, late President of the Convention assembled at Hartford on the fifteenth day of December, 1814, do hereby certify that the foregoing is the original and only journal of the proceedings of that Convention; and that the twenty-seven written pages which compose it, and the printed report, comprise a faithful and complete record of all the motions, resolutions, votes, and proceedings of that Convention. And I do further certify that this journal has been constantly in my exclusive custody, from the time of the adjournment of the Convention to the delivery of it into the office of the Secretary of this Commonwealth.

(Signed) GEORGE CABOT.[1]

BOSTON, Nov. 16, 1819.

In 1831, Roger Minot Sherman testified in a libel case, of course under oath, that, —

"There was not, to the best of his recollection, a single motion, resolution, or subject of debate, but what appears in the journal."

And he said further, —

"I believe I know their proceedings perfectly, and that every measure, done or proposed, has been published to the world."[2]

The third witness is Theodore Dwight, the Secretary of the Convention, the only person, not a member, who was present during the debates; and he says: —

"In the most positive and unhesitating manner, and with all the solemnity which the nature of the case requires, that the *Journal and the Report of the Convention contain a full, complete, and specific account of all the motions, votes, and proceedings of the Convention.*"

[1] See Dwight's History of the Hartford Convention, p. 398.

[2] See Goodrich's Recollections of a Lifetime, II. 26–28, where Mr. Sherman's testimony is given in full; also, ibid., pp. 19–24, for the testimony of Noah Webster on this point, and for the letters of Joseph Lyman as to the preliminary county convention at Northampton, Mass.

And he adds: —

"That no proposition was made in the Convention to divide the Union, to organize the New England States into a separate government, or to form an alliance with Great Britain, or any other foreign power. On the contrary, every motion that was made, every resolution that was offered, and every measure that was adopted, was, in principle and in terms, strictly confined within the limits of the instructions from the several legislatures by whom the delegates were appointed."[1]

The letters of Mr. H. G. Otis on the Hartford Convention substantiate this testimony.[2] The names of the persons who offered motions are not given, nor are the debates reported in the journal. No journal of parliamentary proceedings, strictly speaking, ever contains debates; and the full reporting of the present day was then almost unknown. The omission of the names of those offering motions is perfectly trivial. Rumor had it that Mr. Otis made the first motion for a committee, after they had organized, by choosing Mr. Cabot as President, and Mr. Dwight as Secretary. But there is nothing to be gained by knowing that Mr. Otis offered one motion, or Mr. Dane another. And when the names of all those who served on committees, and drew the reports which guided the Convention, are given, it is still more preposterous to call the omission of the authors of motions "suppression." There can be no suppression of knowledge, useless in itself, and rendered still more valueless by the publication of all matters of real importance. The journal must be accepted on the testimony of three men of unquestioned integrity to be a full and complete record of proceedings.[3] From the loss of the debates, we

[1] See History of Hartford Convention, p. 405.

[2] See Otis's Letters in Defence of the Hartford Convention, Boston, 1824; and Letters by one of the Convention, Washington, 1820.

[3] The journal deposited in the State archives by Mr. Cabot is now in the possession of the Hon. Charles Francis Adams. It was, I believe, presented to Mr. John Quincy Adams by Governor Eustis. A patriotic Democratic House expunged the Hartford Convention resolutions from the journals of their predecessors, and cast out the report from among their archives. One

are unable to sift out individual opinions; but we can hold each and every member responsible for the utterances of the whole, and an analysis of the report will give us the official declaration of the views of the Convention.

The report begins as follows: —

"The Convention is deeply impressed with a sense of the arduous nature of the commission which they were appointed to execute, — of devising the means of defence against dangers, and of relief from oppressions proceeding from the acts of their own government, without violating constitutional principles, or disappointing the hopes of a suffering and injured people. To prescribe patience and firmness to those who are already exhausted by distress is sometimes to drive them to despair, and the progress towards reform by the regular road is irksome to those whose imaginations discern and whose feelings prompt to a shorter course. . . .

"It is a truth not to be concealed that a sentiment prevails to no inconsiderable extent, that administration have given such constructions to that instrument [the Constitution], and practised so many abuses under color of its authority, that the time for a change is at hand. Those who so believe regard the evils which surround them as intrinsic and incurable defects in the Constitution. They yield to a persuasion that no change at any time, or on any occasion, can aggravate the misery of their country. This opinion may ultimately prove to be correct; but as the evidence on which it rests is not yet conclusive, and as measures adopted upon the assumption of its certainty might be irrevocable, some general considerations are submitted, in the hope of reconciling all to a course of moderation and firmness which may save them from the regret incident to sudden decisions, probably avert the evil, or at least insure consolation and success in the last resort."

The prosperity of the country under Washington and Adams is then described in the report as a proof of the

is irresistibly reminded of the revenge of Charles Stuart, when he hung the skeletons of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw in chains, affixed their heads to Temple Bar, and flung the bones of Robert Blake upon a dung-heap. The different degree of ferocity in the two cases corresponds with the difference in time; but all such incidents alike reveal in a deplorable fashion the pettiness and impotence of party malice.

intrinsic worth of the Constitution, while the evils which followed after the first administrations are forcibly represented. The paragraph concludes: —

"But to attempt upon every abuse of power to change the Constitution would be to perpetuate the evils of revolution."

The power of recovery, the vigor of constitutional principles, and the growing change in public opinion are pointed out as arguments against extreme measures, and this portion of the report then concludes as follows: —

"Finally, if the Union be destined to dissolution by reason of the multiplied abuses of bad administrations, it should, if possible, be the work of peaceable times and deliberate consent. Some new form of confederacy should be substituted among those States which shall intend to maintain a federal relation to each other. Events may prove that the causes of our calamities are deep and permanent. They may be found to proceed, not merely from the blindness of prejudice, pride of opinion, violence of party spirit, or the confusion of the times; but they may be traced to implacable combinations of individuals or of States to monopolize power and office, and to trample without remorse upon the rights and interests of commercial sections of the Union. Whenever it shall appear that these causes are radical and permanent, a separation by equitable arrangement will be preferable to an alliance by constraint among nominal friends, but real enemies, inflamed by mutual hatred and jealousy, and inviting by intestine divisions contempt and aggression from abroad. But a severance of the Union by one or more States, against the will of the rest, and especially in time of war, can be justified only by absolute necessity. These are among the principal objections against precipitate measures tending to disunite the States; and, when examined in connection with the farewell address of the Father of his Country, they must, it is believed, be deemed conclusive."

The report then took up those subjects which in the opinion of the Convention were most pressing, and required the most immediate remedies. These were the authority claimed by the administration and Congress over the militia, and the defenceless condition of the Eastern States.

Under the first head, they began by an examination of the claim of the President to be the sole judge as to the exigency of calling out the militia. In order to understand this question, it will be necessary to trace briefly the difficulties which had arisen during the war between Massachusetts and Connecticut and the general government.

Governor Strong had declined to obey the first call for militia in 1812, and had rested his refusal on two grounds: that he, as governor of the State, was judge of the exigency, and not the President; and that the States had the right to officer their militia, a right invaded in his opinion by the general government. Governor Griswold refused the Connecticut militia only on the latter ground. Governor Strong referred both points to the Supreme Court of Massachusetts; and the opinion given and signed by Parsons, Parker, and Sewall confirmed his action.[1] The Legislature and the popular voice concurred with the judges; and the Convention now took the same ground in their report. That this was a blunder, politically, is obvious enough; but a grave legal error was also involved in these opinions. No argument is required to show that, if every governor were sole judge as to the exigency for troops, anarchy would exist whenever there was war, foreign or domestic, and that the central power would be helpless. If such an interpretation were acted on, one of the main objects of the Constitution, "to provide for the common defence," would be frustrated. To give the general government the exclusive power of declaring war, and at the same time to take away the means of carrying on such war, is an absolute contradiction in terms. Unfortunately, the question did not come before the Supreme Court of the United States until 1827, when it was decided that the President was the sole judge of the exigency for calling out the militia.[2] If a United States court had so decided in 1812,

[1] 8 Mass. Reports, Appendix.
[2] Martin *v.* Mott, 12 Wheaton, 19.

there can be little doubt that New England would have submitted, as she did to the embargo decision in 1808.[1] We may fairly acquit the governor, the Convention, the Legislature, and the people of any illegal action, supported as they were by the highest legal authority of the State; but we cannot so easily acquit the judges. Three able lawyers could hardly take so strange a view of so very simple a constitutional question without undue partisanship.

On the second point, as to officering the militia, the court and the governor were correct. The Constitution expressly reserves this right to the States; and the administration had, in attempting to place State militia under the command of subordinate officers of the regular army, unquestionably violated its provisions. This view is that of Mr. Justice Johnson and Mr. Justice Story, who confirmed the opinion of the Massachusetts judges, by saying that the right to officer their own militia was one of the checks on the general government reserved by the States.[2]

The report of the Convention, after dealing with these two principal questions, proceeds with a brief consideration of certain others of a similar nature. These were the classification of the militia, the forcible drafting of militia as such into the regular army, and the enlistment of minors. The two first were recommendations of the Secretary of War, the third had become law. The Convention, after elaborate examination, concluded that all three measures were unconstitutional.

While the Convention were clearly wrong on the first two points, they were probably in the right as to the third; but none of them are of sufficient importance to require discussion now, since they do not illustrate the views of the Convention on the vital question of the rights of States.

The report of the Secretary of the Navy, which advised impressment, was next touched upon, and the inconsistency

[1] Story on the Const., 1st ed., III. 162; and United States *v.* Brig William, 2 Hall's Law Journal, 255.

[2] Houston *v.* Moore, 5 Wheaton, 1.

involved in supporting such a war by such means was pointed out. The unconstitutionality of all these acts was then reviewed in general terms; and the duty of the States to protest against them, as unconstitutional and void, was declared.

The next subject was the common defence, declared to be the principal object of the Convention. The conduct of the war was first reviewed. All the disasters we had endured were set forth; and the defenceless condition of New England, impoverished as she was by the embargo, was strongly described. The report argued that New England could not pay taxes for a defence which was not given her, nor pay two sets of taxes, national and State, both for defence and equally heavy. As a solution of this difficulty, the Convention proposed that —

"These States be allowed to assume their own defence by the militia or other troops. A reasonable portion, also, of the taxes raised in each State, might be paid into its treasury, and credited to the United States, but to be appropriated to the defence of such State, to be accounted for with the United States."

The remainder of the report was devoted to a comparison between the state of the nation under the first two administrations and under the last two, leading up to an argument in support of certain amendments to the Constitution.

The first three of the resolutions adopted recommend to the Legislatures of the States represented in the Convention that they should take proper measures to protect the people against the unconstitutional action of the administration in regard to the militia, that they should endeavor to make the financial arrangement proposed by the Convention with the general government, and that they should provide for the common defence.

The fourth resolution recommends the Legislatures to urge upon the general government seven amendments to the Constitution: 1. To do away with slave representation; 2. That no new State should be admitted without

a two-thirds vote; 3 and 4. That Congress should not be allowed to lay an embargo for more than sixty days, and that, to interdict commerce, a two-thirds vote should be required;[1] 5. That a two-thirds vote should be required to declare war; 6. That no person, except a native-born citizen, should be eligible for any office; 7. That the President should be eligible for only one term. There is no need to discuss the merits, or the reasonableness of the amendments here suggested. The first has been settled, others have ceased to have either interest or importance, while one at least is still agitated. The very fact that the Convention suggested them showed clearly enough that they still respected and adhered to the Constitution; and it was their obvious right, as it is that of all citizens of the United States, to offer any amendments they may see fit to that famous instrument.

Mr. Adams, with great diligence and ingenuity, has looked between the lines of this report to find proof not only of the treasonable intentions of the authors, but also of their duplicity in expressing their views. To me this seems labor misspent. The men who went to Hartford had the courage of their opinions as entirely as Mr. Adams, and they expressed themselves with moderation, but with plainness. He who runs may read in the report, not only the objects of the Convention, but the reasons for its assemblage. A majority of the people in the States represented at Hartford knew themselves to be defenceless against the attacks of a wanton enemy; they attributed their sufferings past and present to a hostile administration, bent on their political effacement; and they believed the war to be both unjustifiable and wicked. Under these circumstances, they determined to take measures for self-preservation; and they were resolved to force the administration to make peace. The separatist feeling was very strong at that moment in

[1] The two-thirds vote to interdict commerce was one of the burning questions in the Constitutional Convention where it was stubbornly supported by the South. "Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis."

New England, and the extremists urged violent measures. Indeed a dissolution was openly desired by the radical wing of the party, and demands for a separate peace had appeared in the newspapers. In this state of affairs, the Federalists determined to call the Convention at Hartford. Mr. Adams says their real object was the dissolution of the Union, and that this was the first step in that direction. Mr. Otis, on the other hand, claims that the object of the Convention was the preservation of the Union. There is truth in both statements, wholly incompatible as they may appear. The most distinguished of foreign writers upon our history has remarked on the strange mental confusion which has always existed in this country among those who at any time discussed or advocated schemes of secession. The same authority has also pointed out that though Americans have always been extremely quick to invoke the rights of States in opposition to the general government, though they were always ready to go to the very edge of dissolution, they were very slow and cautious in committing any overt act.[1] These observations apply with singular aptness to the Hartford Convention. That Convention was the exponent and result of a strong separatist feeling. The bare fact of its existence proved the strength of the separatist forces at work in the community. Yet the men who went to Hartford used these separatist forces to maintain the Union. In short, they said plainly to the general government, "unless you alter your present policy, a dissolution of the Union will ensue." They intended to coerce the administration by threatening them with separation. If their threat was attended to, the Union would be saved; if not, it is mere conjecture whether the Federalists would have pushed matters to extremity. They were determined men, and much in earnest; and the worst might have been feared. Fortunately, events made all such threats and their fulfilment alike unnecessary. Yet the policy of the

[1] Von Holst, Constitutional History of the United States, pp. 64, 65, 77.

Convention was one of delay; and they might and probably would, if there had been occasion, have protracted still further any thing like open resistance. One of their chief objects was to control and restrain the more violent members of their own party. For while the threat of separation is clearly expressed in the report, and the existence of the separatist feeling is recognized in plain terms, the wish for an immediate movement in that direction is deprecated and rejected. This plain and obvious meaning of the report is borne out by other testimony, which serves to show that one, if not the principal, object of the Convention was to prevent violent measures. The wiser Federalists had to choose between controlling and directing the movement themselves, or allowing the extreme partisans to precipitate a dissolution of the Union and possible civil war. With great good sense, they adopted the former alternative, and thus saved the country from two imminent dangers.

Mr. Edmund Quincy says in his Life of his father: —

"The Legislature were very careful to choose men of known moderation of views and tried discretion of conduct. It was for this reason my father believed and said that he was passed by on that occasion. The prudent Federalists, when called upon to face this emergency, were afraid of his impetuous temperament and fiery earnestness. They dreaded lest he might express too well the spirit of those whose urgency extorted the Convention.

"He [Mr. Quincy] always spoke of the Hartford Convention as a tub to the whale, as a dilatory measure to amuse the malcontents, and keep them quiet under inaction, until events might make action unnecessary." [1]

To appreciate the full force of this rejection, it must be recollected that Mr. Quincy was one of the most prominent men in the party, the last great and eloquent leader of the Federalists in Congress.

The same object is mentioned by Mr. Otis, in his letters on the Convention.[2]

[1] Quincy's Life of Josiah Quincy, p. 357, *et seq.* [2] See above, p. 510.

From the letters of Mr. Lowell and Colonel Pickering, given in the next chapter, especially from those descriptive of the members of the Convention, it will be perceived that they disapproved the selection of delegates. Both these gentlemen held extreme views, and they considered the delegates too moderate and conservative in character to act with sufficient vigor. They mistrusted their readiness to take any decisive steps. This is especially noticeable in the expressions they use concerning Mr. Cabot, the recognized head of the Convention. Despite their friendship and admiration for him personally, they regarded him as too prudent and too despondent a man for this emergency. Mr. Lowell says, "I have been unable to discover what Mr. Cabot's views are." Mr. Cabot's opinions were unchanged. He believed now, as in 1804, that, while a dissolution might and ultimately probably would take place, and be perhaps accompanied with important advantages, that schemes for that object were both useless and impracticable. With the greatest reluctance, and only from a high sense of responsibility toward his party and his State, did he accept the position at the head of the Massachusetts delegation. An anecdote preserves the evidence of Mr. Cabot's principal object in going to Hartford. He was accompanied from his house to the Hartford stage-coach by the late Dr. James Jackson, of Boston, at that time of course a young man. Dr. Jackson inquired what they intended to do at Hartford; to which Mr. Cabot replied, "We are going to keep you young hot-heads from getting into mischief." If any further proof is needed to show that the Hartford Convention was not intended to dissolve the Union, let it be remembered that the instructions of the Legislatures expressly forbade the delegates to do any thing repugnant to the relations of the States to the Union.

One other object was prominent among those of the Convention, — to defend themselves from invasion. For this they made provision, by advising the Legislatures to ask

permission from the general government to devote the taxes to their own defence. This deference is hardly consistent with an immediate desire to dissolve the Union or to make a separate peace. The same request had been granted to other States, and it was therefore both natural and proper. If we add to this the evidence of the secretary, that "no proposition was made in the Convention to divide the Union, to organize the New England States into a separate government, or to form an alliance with Great Britain or any other foreign power," we may fairly conclude that the objects and intentions of the Convention were what its reports, its members, and its secretary declared them to be, and not what Mr. Adams or the Democratic party chose to think they were.

But two points remain to be considered, the unconstitutionality of the Convention and its unexampled character. The Hartford Convention adopted and favored the doctrine of Jefferson and Madison, that the States had a right to nullify laws of the United States which were in their opinion unconstitutional. We must remember that this question was then an open one, although it struck at the very existence of the central government. Nullification was, of course, the most effective weapon with which the States could make a constitutional resistance to the general government; and it was therefore generally adopted, not only by the Hartford Convention, but by all the Southern States at different times. There can now be no question of the unconstitutionality of the nullification doctrine; but it was not settled in 1814, nor for many years after. But the great point against the Hartford Convention has always been that it consisted of representatives from several States; and this, it has been argued, was in itself a direct violation of an express provision of the Constitution. In dealing with this question, we should not forget that some of New England's most distinguished lawyers were not only concerned in getting up the Convention, but also served in it as delegates. These men were as well versed in the Constitution as any

men of their time, and it is not to be hastily supposed that they would have unnecessarily violated an express constitutional provision. The clause in question says that no State shall enter into any "agreement or compact" with any other State, without the consent of the United States. The whole question turns upon the two words in quotation marks. If, by the Hartford Convention, certain States entered into an "agreement or compact," they violated the Constitution in so doing. But they did nothing of the kind. The delegates were appointed to "confer with each other, and devise means for their common defence." They were to pave the way for a possible future "agreement or compact," but they were to make none themselves. The States are not forbidden to confer and offer recommendations to their several Legislatures, and this has been done in several instances by commissioners. Moreover, there must be some binding force in order to make an agreement or compact, and here there was none. No State was in any way bound by any thing said or done at Hartford; and this, of itself, shows the non-existence of any "agreement or compact." The authority intrusted to the President to call the Convention together again could not alter the character of the body as at first appointed. They had power merely to recommend to their several Legislatures, who might accept or reject their recommendations as they pleased. The States were at full liberty to confer. This was all that was done at Hartford, and the Convention was therefore strictly within the letter of the Constitution.

The imputation that New England stood alone in her action is easily disproved. The Constitution had not been in force three years, when Virginian congressmen threatened disunion on the floor of the House; and, a few years later, the whiskey insurrection, although not a State matter, gave a very practical illustration of the devotion to the Union in Pennsylvania. In 1799, Jefferson and Madison drew up the famous Virginia and Kentucky reso-

lutions, which embodied for the first time the doctrine of nullification; and Virginian troops were a little later held in readiness to seize the arsenals of the United States. But the period of the war of 1812 was particularly prolific in instances of the separatist feeling; and the demands which at that time came from Democratic States were complied with and forgotten, while the resistance of the minority was long and bitterly remembered.

In 1812, Georgia was dissatisfied with the President's decision against the seizure of East Florida. Despite express orders from Washington, Governor Mitchell not only refused to withdraw the State troops from Florida, but sent another expedition. The Georgia Legislature soon after resolved that, whether Congress authorized it or not, the possession of Florida was essential to their safety, and they passed an act to raise a State army, which thereupon invaded the peninsula. The Constitution says that no State shall "engage in war, unless actually invaded;" and yet Georgia carried on a war of conquest, in the teeth of a direct prohibition from the general government. There is certainly an element of the separatist feeling and of States' rights about such conduct as this.

Virginia, in 1813, passed an act for a State army. They repealed this act only on a promise from the war department that a regiment of regulars should be stationed at Norfolk, and that all Virginian troops heretofore called out for local defence should be paid by the United States, notwithstanding a rule adopted at Washington, and enforced in other States, to pay no militia not called for by the general government. Placed side by side with this, the plan proposed at Hartford for the defence of New England does not look abnormally hideous. Maryland refused at the same time to pay for the defence of Baltimore.

In 1812, a public meeting was held in the city of New York. The chairman was Colonel Fish. The committee who framed the resolutions were John Jay, Rufus King,

Gouverneur Morris, Richard Harrison, Egbert Benson, Matthew Clarkson, and Richard Varick. After stating the war to "be unwise, declared under unfavorable circumstances, and that the consequences to which it leads are alarming, that it is alliance with the French Emperor, and that they have no confidence in the men who declared war," the resolution demands: —

"That representatives be chosen in the several counties, discreet men, friends of peace. These representatives can correspond or confer with each other, and co-operate with the friends of peace in our sister States in devising and pursuing such constitutional measures as may secure our independence and preserve our Union, both of which are endangered by the present war."

These men, too, must be set down as traitors with those who went to Hartford. Indeed, the arch traitor Morris considered the Hartford Convention a tame affair.[1]

In 1813, Vermont refused to call out her militia in obedience to a call from the general government; and, at the very moment of the Hartford Convention, Pennsylvania was making provision for a State army. The instances of outbreaks of the separatist feeling since 1814 are too fresh in every one's mind to need recital here.

All this amounts merely to saying that the principle of separatism was common to all the States in the Union. The gravity and danger of the Hartford Convention were due to the time and place of its assemblage. That such a convention should be held in New England, the very stronghold of the sentiments of Union and nationality, shows not only the extent of the evils from which the people thought they suffered, but also proves how deep-rooted, how vigorous, and how universal the principle of separatism was in the United States. The great practical danger was in the circumstances of the time; for the government was bankrupt, without men, arms, or money; and a general disorganization in the national fabric was only too apparent. One British

[1] Life of Gouverneur Morris, by Sparks, III. 326.

expedition had landed at New Orleans, another was on the northern frontier, and threatened the severance of New England from the rest of the country. We realize now but faintly that the nation stood upon the brink of ruin, — a ruin which the Hartford Convention might have easily precipitated. But the prudence and moderation of the Federalists at that moment saved the country from great perils which even the unexpected peace might have come too late to avert.

The Federalists generally, all the more sensible ones certainly, were satisfied with the work of the Convention. The general government, soon after the Convention adjourned, passed a law which permitted the use of State troops, as desired by New England and urged by the report of the Convention, and not many days after came the welcome tidings of peace. The war party no longer insisted on an acknowledgment of those rights for which alone they had fought, and for which they had shed so much blood and squandered so much treasure. If we judge it only by immediate results, the war must be pronounced a total failure, and the peace was considered then, and for many years after, a most wretched one;[1] but the war party was only too glad to make peace on any terms. The events of the war and the terms of peace fully justified the Federalists, who had denounced it throughout as wicked, unjustifiable, and unnecessary; and, if one looks only at the immediate history and results of the struggle, their assertions cannot be gainsaid. But we, to-day, can see that the Federalists were wrong, though no man then could know it. The war of 1812 was worth all it cost, simply because it was a war. Had we never gained

[1] Mr. John Quincy Adams, who was not likely to be too severe on the treaty, said of it: "O the voracious maw and the bloated visage of national vanity! If it were true that we had vanquished or humbled Britannia, it would be base to exult over her; but, when it is so notorious that the issue of our late war with her was at best a drawn game, there is nothing but the most egregious national vanity that can turn it into a triumph." Diary, IV. 33.

a victory, the mere fact of proving to the world that we could and would fight as a nation would have been sufficient. But the war of 1812 did more than establish our nationality in the eyes of foreigners: it taught England that there was one people who could meet and conquer her at sea, and it taught us to love and cherish our navy. For these reasons, no American, though the war of 1812 was fruitful in misery and disaster, and was almost in the end our ruin, would wish to have its record effaced from our annals.

No persons hailed peace with such joy as the Federalists, and at its arrival all their bitter opposition faded away. They disappeared as a party from our history, and the Hartford Convention marks the last point in their career. They disappeared because they no longer had a reason for existence. The war party adopted all the doctrines for which the Federalists had striven, and which became the principles of our government. This new school of Federalist-Democrats supported and maintained the army, the navy, the funds, the national bank, the protective policy, the liberal construction of the Constitution, every thing in short which Hamilton cherished and Jefferson loathed. The Federalists had no longer an excuse for living as a political party, and they were soon merged in the ranks of their old opponents and new allies. But, while the party perished, the principles on which it was founded survived, and we have to-day a Democratic government managed on Federalist principles. Jefferson governs by the rules and maxims of Hamilton. The Hartford Convention, marking as it does the extinction of one of the great original parties, stands at the threshold of a new era, and gains in this way a dramatic interest and significance.

I do not propose to enter into either a defence or a eulogy of the last of the Federalists who gathered at Hartford in 1814. They require neither at my hands. I have sought to trace their policy, unveil their motives, and reveal their true objects. If I have done this, I am satisfied. An ex-

position of their history and all their papers, public and private, are before the world; and on these posterity and future historians will pass judgment. But this I will say, that I honor and respect those Federalists who, believing as they did, shrank not from what they considered their duty to their State, to their party, and to themselves.

The men of the Hartford Convention strove honestly to do their duty as seemed best in their eyes, and they need not fear the verdict of posterity.

With the incidents of an awful civil war still fresh in our memories, we naturally turn from aught that savors of the separatist spirit, and State rights have long been esteemed words of evil omen. But let us not therefore forget that State rights are the great safeguards of our liberties. Let us remember, when we judge the Hartford Convention, that resistance to oppression has been the peculiar glory of the English race. Let us recall the history of Massachusetts. Her stubborn spirit, though slow to anger, has never failed in the hour of trial. Who would wish it extinguished because it has not always been directed with perfect wisdom, and who would wish to believe that it is less vigorous to resist wrong now than at any period of her history? But a few short years ago, our greatest poet said, on the occasion of another war, which New England believed to be wicked and unjustifiable: —

> "Ef I'd *my* way, I hed ruther
> We should go to work and part, —
> They take one way, we take t'other:
> Guess it wouldn't break my heart.
> Man hed ought to put asunder
> Them that God has noways jined;
> An' I shouldn't gretly wonder
> Ef there's thousands o' my mind."

The old spirit breathes in these lines. And it is well that it should not die among us; for, while it is our duty to crush sectionalism in every form, it is no less our duty to guard the great Anglo-Saxon principle of local self-government.

CHAPTER XIII.

1812-1815.

Correspondence relating to the Hartford Convention.

THE letters included in this chapter are from hitherto unpublished manuscripts, and are taken from the Pickering MSS. and from the correspondence of Governor Strong. Some of them, notably the first, do not relate directly either to the Hartford Convention or its objects; but, as illustrations of the opinions held during the war of 1812 by some of the most distinguished Federalists, they have appeared to me of sufficient historical value to merit publication. The most interesting letters are unquestionably those of Colonel Pickering and Mr. John Lowell. From those written by the former, we get a clear idea of the views entertained by the most extreme of the Federalist leaders. Colonel Pickering's theory in 1804, and subsequently down to 1814, was to separate from the Union, and then, by the injury thus inflicted upon the Southern States, to force them to re-form the Union on terms dictated by New England. The "Northern Confederacy" seems to have been intended as the last resort, in case this plan of coercion failed. Behind the dissolution of the Union, so zealously urged by Colonel Pickering, therefore, was a much more extended plan, — to restore to New England and to the principles of the Federalist party their ancient political supremacy. In judging this plan, we must remember that the almost indefinite extension to the westward was then but little thought of. In the absence of railroads and telegraphs, there were no apparent means of uniting firmly more than

a very limited number of States, while mere difficulty of communication made an extended area seem an impossibility for one government. Few men at the beginning of this century looked beyond the Alleghanies, and the extension made at the South-west was regarded by the Federalists as in itself a total destruction of the old balance of power. Such were the premises from which Colonel Pickering reasoned, nor was the possible execution of his plan by any means so chimerical in 1814 as it appears in 1877. One British expedition, although repulsed, still threatened our Northern frontier, while another had arrived at New Orleans. That England would obtain the control of our western territory, as Lord Castlereagh at first demanded from our commissioners at Ghent, seemed by no means improbable. The war had drained the national resources, and the Union appeared on the verge of dissolution. Disorganization had indeed begun, and even the most Democratic States were making independent movements of defence. In such a condition of things, the withdrawal of New England would have brought the whole fabric down in ruins; and she could then have either dictated her own terms in a new Union, or could have formed a Northern Confederacy in which she would have been supreme. Fortunately, Colonel Pickering was not supported by most of the Federalist leaders. We have seen by former letters the lukewarmness with which his plan was received in 1804; and in 1814 he appears to have found only two prominent men, Mr. Lowell and Mr. Gouverneur Morris, who fully sympathized with him. The other leaders were too prudent and too moderate to plunge into desperate measures. Yet it is easy to see what a tremendous political revolution they might have wrought. Colonel Pickering expressed perfect satisfaction with the results of the Convention; but we can reconcile this with his previous letters only on the theory that he trusted to events to force the moderate leaders up to his position, and bided his time. He had certainly urged much more deci-

sive measures as the duty of the Convention than any that were afterwards adopted at Hartford. It is also very striking that both Colonel Pickering and Mr. Lowell, dissatisfied as they were with the moderation of the party leaders in Massachusetts, distinctly disclaim any wish for a separation for its own sake. Could they have the Union governed as they believed it ought to be, they had no wish for a separation; and, much as they felt themselves injured, they desired separation only as a means of coercion to re-form the old Union or to make a new one on better principles. Certainly, if we may trust to their own letters, no one held more advanced views than Mr. Lowell and Colonel Pickering, yet they expressly say they do not regard a dissolution as good in itself. This finally disposes of Mr. Adams's imputation that the Massachusetts leaders sought disunion for its own sake, and solely to gratify their own selfish and personal ambition.

The letters from Mr. Gore to Governor Strong, which form the last of this series, are of interest in showing the satisfaction given to the Federalists generally by the report of the Hartford Convention, and that the opinions of that body accurately reflected the sentiments of the majority of the party.

Marshall to Pickering.

Richmond, Dec. 11, 1812.

Dear Sir, — Your letter transmitting the documents in relation to the French decree of April, 1812, did not reach this place till I had left it on an annual tour to the mountains, and were not received till October last. I thank you very sincerely for this flattering attention. My sentiments on the report[1] concur precisely with yours. It contains a labored apology for France, but none for ourselves. It furnishes no reason for our tame, unmurmuring acquiescence under the double insult of withholding this paper from us, and declaring in our face that it had been put in our possession. The report is silent on another subject of still deeper interest. It leaves unnoticed the fact that the Berlin and

[1] War Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Milan decrees were certainly not repealed by the insidious decree of April, since it had never been communicated to the French courts or cruisers, and since their cruisers had at a period subsequent to the pretended date of that decree received orders to continue to execute the offensive decrees on American vessels. The report manifests no sensibility at the disgraceful circumstances, which tend strongly to prove that this paper was fabricated to satisfy the importunities of Mr. Barlow, and was antedated to suit French purposes; nor at the contempt manifested for the feelings of Americans and their government by not deigning so to antedate it as to save the credit of our administration, by giving some plausibility to their assertion that the repeal had taken place on the 1st of November. But this is a subject with which I dare not trust myself.

I look with anxious solicitude, with mingled hope and fear, to the great events which are taking place in the north of Germany. It appears probable that a great battle will be fought on or near the Elbe, and never had the world more at stake than will probably depend on that battle. Your opinions had led me to hope that there was some prospect of a particular peace for ourselves. My own judgment, could I trust it, would tell me that peace or war will be determined by the events in Europe.

With much respect and esteem, I am, dear sir, your obedient

J. MARSHALL.

PICKERING TO SAMUEL PUTNAM.[1]

FEB. 4, 1814.

If a step of this kind[2] should be adopted, one more should be taken: send forth a solemn and earnest address to your constituents, in plain but forcible language, which all can understand and feel, stating concisely all the great evils wantonly brought on them by the acts of the national government, and for no possible cause but to co-operate with Europe's execrable tyrant, the ruler of France. Recite your demands on Congress for relief; but tell the people that while, with a sincere and strong desire to maintain the union of the States, you have made one more application to that body for a redress of grievances, past experience too lamentably shows how

[1] Senator in the Massachusetts Legislature.

[2] The passage of certain resolutions addressed to Congress against the continuance of the war, and in favor of the right of self-defence.

small is the hope of relief; that therefore they must prepare their minds, and hold themselves in readiness to "right themselves," and remove from them that accumulated load of oppression which is no longer to be endured.

Declarations of this sort by Massachusetts, especially if concurred in by the other New England States, would settle the business at once. But though made *now* by Massachusetts alone, you surely may rely on the co-operation of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, and I doubt not of Vermont and New York. With the executives and legislatures of most and the representatives of all of them, you can freely communicate.

Ought there not to be a proposal of a convention of delegates from those six States? Recollect the times that are past, when circular letters were first sent from the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, the cradle of American liberty, — whence ensued our organized opposition to meditated oppression, the *harbinger* of tyranny, but which, as compared with the actual tyranny of our own government, would now appear insignificant.

In describing in your address to the people (for I presume you will not rise without one) the oppressions above referred to, and especially the calamities of this profligate war, will there be any impropriety — nay, does not the actual state of things loudly call for it? — after showing concisely how the war is unnecessary and unjust, and how impossible by its continuance for any length of time whatever to obtain a relinquishment on the part of Great Britain of the right of impressing her own seamen from neutral merchant ships, for which absolutely hopeless object alone the war is yet maintained, — after concisely showing all this, ought you not to caution all the citizens of Massachusetts not to yield by personal services or by money any voluntary aid in carrying on the war, which, being criminal in its origin and continuance and ruinous in its consequences, all those who voluntarily contribute to its support will be involved in its guilt; and then solemnly denounce all who shall render such voluntary assistance as enemies of their country? I have more to say, but must do it in another letter.

Very truly yours,

T. PICKERING.

Pickering to Samuel Putnam.

City of Washington, Feb. 7, 1814.

Dear Sir, — Not looking to Massachusetts at this time for any other than preparatory measures of minds and means to vindicate the rights of the commercial and navigating States, the intimations in my letter of the 4th went not beyond those objects, and I presume they are even *within* the limits of moderation. I shall expect your answer informing me of the degree on the political thermometer to which the temper of men entitled to take the lead has risen: I mean as to practicable measures, which must depend on the support of the people. The *people*, however, are always best pleased with bold, decisive measures. And, if you wait for additional oppression, the danger of tame submission will be increased. It is the *gradual* introduction of tyranny that puts in jeopardy the liberties of a free people.

Not to trouble you with further observations, let me conclude with the hope and confidence that the tones of Massachusetts will be strong and imposing; and that she will prepare to execute boldly and firmly the measures which a just and reasonable redress of her wrongs authorize and urge her to take, and in which the ardent wishes and blessings of all the good and patriotic citizens of the United States will attend you. And let me once more assure you that to New England, especially to Massachusetts, its head, all such men anxiously look for redemption. Let then her glory as well as her own and the general safety animate her in the honorable attempt, which, well conducted, cannot fail of success.

I am, &c., T. Pickering.

Samuel Putnam to Pickering.

Boston, Feb. 11, 1814.

Dear Sir, — The Senate have just passed the enclosed resolutions upon the petition of the town of Falmouth for protection, the last of which (the best measure that we have adopted this session) occasioned great excitement on the part of the minority. I have received your two late favors. It is the settled determination *not to petition Congress again.*

The select committee from each county have agreed to certain resolutions expressive of the rights of Massachusetts and of the

oppressions of the general government, recommending the passing of sundry laws: one, to protect the persons and property of our citizens from illegal seizures, made without warrant, issued upon complaint on oath; another, inflicting suitable penalties upon all who shall obstruct any persons going from port to port in the State, after giving or offering to give bond to the collector not to go to any foreign port, &c., — this to be in force after the 10th of June next, unless Congress shall before repeal the embargo, or so modify it as that it shall cease to violate the rights of Massachusetts; and a resolve that the people shall instruct their representatives, at the next session of the General Court, as to the expediency of appointing delegates to meet the delegates who may be appointed by other States in convention, for the purpose of securing their commercial and other rights. These projects have been received with great unanimity.

They may undergo some modification, but I apprehend will in substance pass the Legislature. An address to the people will also be made, but whether by the Legislature or by the Federalists is not yet decided.

You will be surprised to learn that Mr. Dane,[1] of Beverly, of his own accord lately told me that he had learned from long experience that (to use his own words) "it will not do to trust the Boston lead." I will give you a particular account when we meet, which will prove that Dane is as good a prophet as historian.

In haste, I am affectionately yours,

SAMUEL PUTNAM.

SAMUEL PUTNAM TO PICKERING.

BOSTON, Feb. 22, 1814.

DEAR SIR, — The enclosed has passed the Legislature this day; and, notwithstanding it falls short of the wishes of a vast number of our friends, there will (I trust) be no want of union and firmness in our future measures.

I remain affectionately yours,

SAMUEL PUTNAM.

[1] Nathan Dane, the distinguished lawyer, reputed author of the Ordinance of 1787, founder of the Dane Law School at Cambridge, and one of the delegates to the Hartford Convention.

Resolves on the Petition of the Town of Falmouth.

1. *Resolved*, That his Excellency the Governor be and hereby is authorized to furnish the town of Falmouth, in the county of Barnstable, or any other town which in his opinion may be in danger of invasion, with such guns and ammunition as in his discretion may be thought proper.

2. *Resolved*, That his Excellency the Governor be and hereby is authorized to accept the services of any military corps, or of individuals as volunteers, and cause the same to be organized in such mode as he may deem proper, to be held in readiness for the special defence and safety of this Commonwealth.

Chancellor Kent to Pickering.

Albany, April 26, 1814.

Dear Sir, — My brother who arrived here yesterday delivered me your speech on the loan bill, which you were so obliging as to enclose to me. I had seen it before, and permit me to say that I do and have long held the doctrines contained in your speech, and which I think you have most clearly illustrated. I have differed from most of my Federal friends here; for I always was of opinion that the *orders in council* of November, 1807, were, under the then existing circumstances of Europe, justifiable on principles of public law. They resulted from necessary self-defence, and as against the extraordinary determination of France were a just weapon of retaliation and resistance. The speeches of Mr. Percival and Mr. Canning in Parliament, on this point, I always believed to be solid. But peace be to their *manes*. You have more undeniably, than any writer I have seen, expressed the baseness of the motive and the hypocrisy of the manner of our first embargo, and the restrictive laws that followed it. But, here also, peace be to its *manes*; and as the storm has gone over, and something like a serene sky smiles again, I look forward to better times, and to the hope that the profligate administration of the Jeffersonian dynasty is permanently checked.

Be assured, sir, that I feel the utmost respect for your public and private character, and the best wishes for your happiness.

Sincerely yours, James Kent.

Extract from a Letter of Pickering to Putnam.

October, 1814.

As abandoned by the general government, except for taxing us, we must defend ourselves, so we ought to seize and hold fast the revenues indispensable to maintain the force necessary for our protection against the foreign enemy, and the still greater evil in prospect, domestic tyranny.

Extract from Letter of Pickering to John Lowell.

October, 1814.

I hope the character of the report to our State Legislature, signed H. G. Otis, will be maintained. A convention of the New England States two years ago (which I then confidently expected) would have superseded the one now contemplated, and have saved thousands of lives and millions of money, by putting at that time an end to the war. But timidity in the garb of prudence defeated that salutary proposal. Faithfully yours, T. P.

Pickering to Gouverneur Morris.

City of Washington, Oct. 29, 1814.

Dear Sir, — To-day I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 17th. I was gratified to find my own sentiments corresponding with yours. "Union" is the talisman of the dominant party; and many Federalists, enchanted by the magic sound, are alarmed at every appearance of opposition to the measures of the *faction*, lest it should endanger the "Union." I have never entertained such fears. On the contrary, in adverting to the ruinous system of our government for many years past, I have said: "Let the ship run aground. The shock will throw the present pilots overboard, and then competent navigators will get her once more afloat, and conduct her safely into port." I have even gone so far as to say that a separation of the Northern section of States would be ultimately advantageous, because it would be temporary, and because in the interval the just rights of the States would be recovered and secured; that the Southern States would earnestly seek a reunion, when the rights of both would be defined and established on a more equal and therefore more durable basis.

At a late consultation among Federalists, the great question was agitated, "What part shall we take when the system of taxation shall be brought before us?" In general (I do not know but universally, as to those who *spoke*), it seemed to be concluded that, as the nature of the war was now changed from offensive to defensive, we could not withhold our assent. At the same time, it was admitted that the present rulers were incompetent to carry on the war, and that the money raised by means of a system of heavy taxation would, like the millions already obtained, be profusely wasted. But, in assenting to the taxes, all agreed that it would be proper to protest against the administration, and declare it incompetent to maintain the war or to make peace! I dissented from this doctrine, and avowed my opinion that our assent to the system of taxation should be given only on the condition that the administration should be changed, so that Federalists should control the public measures, and apply the public funds to support them. I presume I shall not be left alone. I trust a number of Eastern members, at least of my colleagues, will agree with me, unless on better advice we should think it expedient to adopt the plan of our other Federal brethren. This day Eppes[1] called up the resolutions of the Committee of Ways and Means; and Mr. Oakley[2] (who is a man of talents) took the ground above mentioned, of advocating the system of severe taxation, and protesting against the competency of the men into whose hands the public revenues would be thrown. The reproaches which on this plan are necessarily cast on the administration and its abettors in the two Houses will render these more bitter, and urge them, from pride and resentment, to pursue their course with increased obstinacy.

As you suppose, some men "are on stilts as to British arrogance and audacity, in proposing terms of peace to which we cannot listen without disgrace." I confess they did not disturb me. For some of them (on which our commissioners had no instructions) I was in a degree prepared. In conversation with my friends at home, we had concluded that Great Britain would exclude us from those very fisheries, which she now says she will not again yield to us *without an equivalent*, but not attempt to deny us the cod-fisheries in the

[1] John Eppes, member of Congress from Virginia, and son-in-law of Jefferson.

[2] Thomas Jackson Oakley, member of Congress from New York, afterwards judge and chief justice of the Superior Court of New York.

open sea, — that is, on the Banks of Newfoundland. What equivalent was contemplated by the British Government seemed to me very obvious. They want a direct road from Halifax to Quebec. This will cross the province of Maine, belonging to Massachusetts, to which State those fisheries are almost exclusively interesting. Massachusetts may exchange the north-east corner of Maine for the privilege of participating in the *British* fisheries.

As to the lakes, I said more than a year ago that it would be a most desirable thing if Great Britain and the United States could agree to have neither armed vessels on the lakes nor any fortifications on their borders, but that Great Britain could not so agree, because in Canada she was weak, and we were strong and daily increasing in strength, which would enable us to invade and overrun her dominions there before she could prepare to defend them. But this proposition of hers is not a *sine qua non.* In its present form, I have an entire repugnance to it. She would doubtless agree either to stipulate that neither power should keep any naval force on the lakes, each fortifying on the land as it pleased, or to say nothing about it, when both would be in the situation existing prior to the war.

As to the Indian boundary, I soothed some of my friends by asking them what Great Britain demanded, answering that she required no cession of territory to herself (in this proposition), nor to the Indians; for the latter, being proprietors of the soil, Great Britain demanded in their behalf that we should relinquish our *right of pre-emption*, which was really all the right we could set up. I added that, the British demand out of the question, *good policy* should dictate to us the same measure, — to prevent further encroachments on the Indians (and consequently a renewal of hostilities), the dispersion of our citizens over vast and indefensible regions, when we had yet so many millions of acres of good lands without inhabitants.

To effect a peace, our rulers must be changed, and men less *proud* and less *haters of Great Britain* be employed as negotiators.

Faithfully yours, T. PICKERING.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS TO PICKERING.

MORRISANIA, Nov. 1, 1814.

DEAR SIR, — I have received yours of the 21st of October, and now see that we are to be taxed beyond our means, and subjected

to military conscription. These measures are devised and pursued by the gentle spirits who for more than twenty years have lavished on Britain the bitterest vulgarity of Billingsgate, because she impressed her seamen for self-defence, and have shed a torrent of crocodile tears over the poor of that country, crushed, as they pretend, by oppressive taxes to gratify royal ambition. Nevertheless, this waste of men and money, neither of which can be squeezed out of our extenuated States, is proposed for the conquest of Canada. And thus after swearing and forswearing backward and forward till their fondest adherents were grown giddy, and after publishing their willingness to abandon every former pretext, the administration boldly avow that, although we are so simple as to call this a war of defence, it is still on their part a war of conquest.

What will the Federal gentlemen now say, who, to excuse their support of this administration, assumed that their unprovoked, unwise, unjust war of aggression had, all at once, become defensive. I admire and applaud the proud consistency of our adversaries, who say to these over-quondam friends: "We disdain your proffered support. You shall not participate in power, neither shall your quibble serve your turn. We wage no defensive war, but mean to conquer Canada. Vote for that or vote against us, we care not which."

And now, my good friend, be, I pray you, so kind as to tell the pliant patriots who become converts to Mr. Monroe's scheme, frankly communicated to enemies as to friends, of marching into Canada by way of inducing the British forces on our coast to meet us there, that, the St. Lawrence being no longer navigable, this sublime diversion cannot take effect before the month of May. But perhaps the Secretary, as facetious as he is sagacious, meant this diversion merely as a pleasantry to divert himself and his colleagues at the eagerness with which Federal gudgeons will, in the lack of bait, swallow a bare hook.

Doubts are, I find, entertained whether Massachusetts is in earnest, and whether she will be supported by the New England family. But surely these outrageous measures must rouse their patriot sentiment to cast off the load of oppression.

Yours truly, GOUV. MORRIS.

PICKERING TO JOHN LOWELL.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, NOV. 7, 1814.

DEAR SIR, — You may recollect that, in my letter to Governor Sullivan (April 16, 1808), I said with earnestness "that it was essential to the public safety that the blind confidence in our rulers should cease, that the *State Legislatures* should know the facts and reasons on which important general laws were founded, and especially that those States whose farms were on the ocean, and whose harvests were gathered in every sea, should immediately and seriously consider how to preserve them;" adding that "nothing but the sense of the commercial States, clearly and practically expressed, would save them from ruin." The House of Representatives of Massachusetts was at that time Federal (and was not the Senate also Federal?); and, with the spirit which ought to have been exerted, the evils of Jefferson's unlimited embargo might have been shortened, and probably a free commerce (instead of the miserable and mischievous non-intercourse and other restrictions) restored, especially if Connecticut had been invited to co-operate. *Obsta principiis* was the motto of the movers and leaders of our Revolution, before — long before — the obstinacy and pride of the British government rendered that Revolution unavoidable. The praises of the sages and heroes of that Revolution are in the mouths of all our political coxcombs; yet every man who now exhibits one spark of their spirit is denounced as the friend of Britain and the enemy of his own country, while other Federalists, alike sensible of the wanton oppression and tyranny of our rulers, have shrunk from every proposition that contained one particle of boldness.

When the war had been declared, the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, again Federal, addressed their constituents to rouse them to that degree of opposition to our rulers which their interests and safety required within the pale of the Constitution, recommending meetings of towns and county conventions. There was a convention in Essex, in July, 1812. We thought it necessary to have a State Convention, and chose delegates to attend it. This measure was defeated at "The Headquarters of Good Principles." I did not yet despair of our country; for, on conversing afterwards with Chief Justice Parsons, he told me the House would take up the business at the ensuing winter session. This arrived, and nothing was done. In 1813, the House of Representatives of

Massachusetts addressed a long remonstrance to Congress, with just spirit enough in it to make it the *jest* of the *majority*. Massachusetts had now become an object of contempt. The majority men, and their partisans abroad, concluded that Massachusetts had neither talents nor fortitude to plan and to execute any efficient measure to control or to check their destroying projects. Hence I almost dreaded to hear of any movements in Massachusetts, lest, like all former ones, it should end in smoke, and sink the State still deeper in disgrace. My hopes are now revived, and this day strengthened, on seeing the names of the Connecticut delegates. I know them all, save Sherman, — who is the son or nephew of the famous Roger Sherman, and, I am told, a *clever* man. For a good while past, when intelligent and spirited Federalists of the Middle States (particularly of Maryland and Virginia) have said to me, "We look to New England, and especially to Massachusetts, for salvation," I have been ready to hang my head, I have been mortified in the extreme, because I could say nothing to encourage their hopes and confidence.

I am inclined to think there was a time, in the early period of the war, when the sentiments of a New England Convention (which might have been strengthened by a delegation from New York, by the authority of their Federal House of Representatives), boldly and firmly expressed, might have put an end to it, while Britain was solicitous to make peace, without the offer of any hard or unpleasant terms.

I hope in God that the delegates of Massachusetts (a decided majority, at least) may now prove their readiness to *act* as well as to *speak*. I consider the destiny of New England, and, in the result, of the United States, to be placed in the hands of the proposed Convention. While any symptoms of *faint-heartedness* will ruin all, the wise sentiments and efficient plans the Convention will be able to express and devise, and the dignified firmness with which they shall be enforced, forbidding every suspicion that they will not be verified in *act*, will insure the wished-for success. The forlorn condition of the general government, and the destitute and helpless situation of the States south of the Potomac, will render your victory easy and complete. That victory will be used not to *destroy*, but to *recover* and *confirm* the Union of the States on more equal, solid, and durable bases.

The enclosed extracts of letters from Virginia will enable you to

estimate the real power of that State, which, by a few of her bad citizens, has led us all to the brink of ruin. The senator in the State Legislature of Virginia is an old Revolutionary officer, with whom I am acquainted, and a decided Federalist. The other letter-writer I do not know personally; a brother of his, a Federalist, I know very well. They are of one of the wealthy families of Virginia.

The House of Representatives have wasted a number of days on the bill for enabling the President to accept the service of corps of volunteers; and to-day one of its Kentucky friends, observing that in its present altered form it was inconsistent and would be inefficient, moved to have it *lie on the table*, — adopted. While under discussion to-day, a Georgia war man (a warm blade, named Barnett [1]), who seemed to place no great confidence in the volunteer bill, said the people had pronounced the war *right*, and they must be *compelled* to come out and face it. "We [said the member] have fed this nation too long with *soft* corn, sir: we have been afraid of our popularity, sir." Very truly and respectfully yours,

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

PICKERING TO LOWELL.

(*Confidential.*)

CITY OF WASHINGTON, Nov. 7, 1814.

MY DEAR SIR, — I observe that Mr. Cabot is at the head of the list of the Massachusetts delegates for the Convention at Hartford, and I am glad to see him there. His information is extensive, his experience and observation invaluable. I do not know who has more political sagacity, a sounder judgment, or more dignity of character with unspotted integrity, and perhaps no man's advice would go further to save a nation that was in his view *salvable*. But does he not despair of the Commonwealth? He considers the evil — the *radical* evil — to be inherent in the government itself, in democracy, and therefore incurable. Will he, then, think any plan which the wisdom of the convention may devise worth an effort of his mind? Yes, it will be answered, or he would not have consented to take a seat in it. But was he not *pressed* into this situation, *reluctantly* consenting to take it? Much against his will, and contrary to his own better judgment, he was placed at the

[1] William Barnett, member from Georgia, 1812–1815.

head of the committee which, in 1806, subscribed and sent to Washington the remonstrance drawn by Lloyd against the British doctrine concerning neutral trade. He signed it (he afterwards told me) *officially*, as one of the merchants' (or town's) committee.

He once said to me (perhaps twelve or eighteen months ago), "Why can't you and I let the world ruin itself its own way?" These were his words: they sunk deep into my mind, and I confess to you that they never occur to my thoughts unaccompanied with regret. In this wicked world, it is the duty of every good man, though he cannot restore it to *innocence*, to strive to prevent its *growing worse*. This has been your course. As Paul among the Christian apostles, you among the political teachers may say, "I have labored more abundantly than they all."

Most sincerely, adieu. T. PICKERING.

PICKERING TO LOWELL.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, Nov. 28, 1814.

DEAR SIR, — Although I have lately troubled you with several letters, I trust you will excuse one more.

As my thoughts cannot fail of being much occupied with the deplorable condition of our country, the cause of its calamities, the means of deliverance, and the practicable guard against their return, — subjects of the greatest importance, but of the greatest difficulty, and which necessarily turn my eyes toward the Hartford Convention, as the best hope of our best men, — so I consider it the duty of reflecting minds to contribute whatever occurs that may with any probability merit the attention of that body. While, therefore, I offer my mite, I am highly gratified that this great subject now employs your pen.

Like you, I have uniformly disclaimed every idea of a separation of the States, while the liberty and safety of the parts can be maintained in a union of the whole. At the same time, I have considered that there may be evils more to be deprecated than a separation.[1]

[1] Colonel Pickering elsewhere says (p. 535) that he even went so far as to speak of separation as ultimately advantageous. Here he refers to it as an evil. Colonel Pickering was not a man to deceive himself with phrases, and then write them to John Lowell. Such statements go far to disprove Mr. Adams's charge that the Federalists desired a dissolution of the Union, as in itself a good and advantageous thing.

An intelligent member from Kentucky lately remarked to me that a connection of New England with the States on the Mississippi and its waters would be more advantageous to the former than the Southern Atlantic States, because the latter will have considerable navigation of their own, while their products will be less abundant than those of the Western States, which must for ever remain destitute of ships and seamen. He mentioned their flour, tobacco, flax, hemp, and cotton, already vast in amount, and rapidly increasing. For some time past, I had contemplated alike this subject in this point of view, although formerly I, with many others, felt disposed to let the Western States go off, leaving the "good old thirteen States" (as John Randolph called them) to themselves, and, so left, it is natural to suppose they would be more firmly united; for the Southern States, conscious of their separate impotence, would cling to the strength of the North.

After deciding on the means of defence[1] and relief from present calamities, I presume the Convention will consider how we may best guard against their future recurrence, by amending the Constitution. It may be necessary, —

1. To abolish negro representation.

2. To prohibit the durable interruption of commerce under any pretence, nor at all without the concurrence of nine of the Atlantic States.

3. To render the President ineligible a second time.

4. To prohibit the election of a second President from the same State in immediate succession to the first.

5. To restore the original mode of electing the President and Vice-President; to prevent the election of a fool for the latter.

6. To make some new provision for appointing to offices, civil and military. Ever since Jefferson came to the chair of state, the public offices have been instruments of bribery, more extensive and more influential than the treasury of England in the hands of her ministers. This system of Jefferson and Madison has more than all other causes corrupted the morals of the people.

7. To render naturalization more difficult, and absolutely to exclude from office and from the national legislature all who are not natives.

[1] All these propositions of Colonel Pickering were considered by the Convention, except Nos. 6, 10, and 11, and the last clause in No. 5, — "to prevent the election of a fool as Vice-President."

8. To limit the number of representatives, which, whatever shall be the future population of these States, shall never be exceeded.

9. To require the vote of two-thirds or three-fourths of each House of Congress to a declaration of war.

10. As a further check to the waging of wars of ambition, of pride, of hatred, or of any other evil passion, to prohibit the borrowing of money by means of any discount or bonus, or at any rate of interest higher than the average rate of interest in the three States which, in the year next preceding the declaration, shall have contributed the largest sums to the regular public revenues. If the country at any time is not in a condition to engage in a war without usurious loans, it will amount to a proof that war ought not to be made. If war be commenced against the United States, and for causes so flagrantly unjust as that the government cannot prevent it, then, as the attack will rouse the whole nation, neither men nor money can be withheld in its defence.

11. What can be done with the country west of the Mississippi? If, as it becomes peopled, new States are to be founded, the old Atlantic States will become insignificant. To avoid this evil, shall the States west of the Mississippi form a separate confederacy?

12. It has more than once occurred to me that the first power granted to Congress, in the present Constitution, has not been accurately understood.

"The Congress shall have power —

"To lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises." I ask, for what purposes, and answer in the words of the Constitution: "to pay the debts, and provide for the common defence and general welfare of the United States." The words which follow prove this to be the correct construction; "but all duties, imposts, and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States." As I have often heard this passage quoted, the laying and collecting taxes, &c., has been taken for one power, and "to pay the debts, and provide for the common defence and general welfare of the United States," as a separate and distinct power, and that of providing for the general welfare as an independent and universal power, where not expressly limited in other parts of the Constitution as a power to be exercised in all things affecting the general welfare, without any reference to the expenditure of the "taxes, duties, imposts, and excises."

Such are the ideas which have now occurred to me; and, as

possibly you may think some of them proper to be embraced in your inquiry, "What the Convention can do, and ought to do," &c., I have taken the liberty thus to communicate them for your consideration.

A friend of mine from Albany has just put into my hands a letter, which, he says, is written by a worthy and judicious man of that city. It is dated the 23d instant. The writer says: "We have given up all hope of any better times from any thing in the power or disposition of the general government, and have turned our eyes to the East, from whence we hope to see the sun of liberty arise once more, to cheer our hearts and bless our country. Democracy is sinking here daily, even in their own estimation. And, should the Eastern States move on unitedly in the GREAT WORK, I believe I may say, without the spirit of prophecy, this State will wheel in almost one solid column in support of their measures."

"The pressure in this place for cash is greater than has ever been known. STATE BANK sick — cannot take any food. J. T. [John Tayler, the lieutenant-governor, a zealous Madisonian] is as pliable as any man, — fears his loan to government is gone. Spencer[1] is much alarmed, and even B. Knower speaks evil of the administration; and some of our Demos. admit the principle, when alone, 'that the Eastern States have the right of proceeding to protect themselves.'"

Multitudes in Vermont are making money by the war. And, considering the small preponderance of Federalists in that State, I have thought it prudent in them to suspend a co-operation until the proceedings of the Convention should be known, when Vermont can without difficulty form a junction.

I am, &c., T. PICKERING.

LOWELL TO PICKERING.

(*Confidential.*)

BOSTON, Dec. 3, 1814.

DEAR SIR, — You wrote me on the 7th of November a confidential letter on the subject of the Convention at Hartford, to which I have failed to reply, owing to my engagements. My feelings on that subject, I perceive, are very similar to yours; how far our

[1] Ambrose Spencer, the distinguished lawyer and judge, and afterwards chief justice of the New York Supreme Court.

projects would agree I cannot say. I gave great offence during the sitting of our Legislature by openly opposing the calling a convention. I was attacked with great asperity by some of my best friends, and among the rest by my friend B. Pickman, Jr.,[1] at the governor's, who threw in a hint or two also against me.

But when I explained my reasons, which were that I was convinced that the Convention would not go far enough, and that the first measure ought to be to recommend to the States to pass laws to prevent our resources in men and money from being withdrawn, they all started, and said I was going farther than anybody.

I was always convinced, and am now, that the Convention will do little; that they will be ridiculed by one party, and loudly censured by the other. I admit that it is a very responsible situation and one of great difficulty; but they ought not to have accepted it, unless they felt, each one for himself, that he was ready for great and decided measures, although he might not have made up his opinion as to what they would be.

I say no man should have accepted such an office, if he expected it was to end in mere argument or remonstrance.

We have had enough of these from Mr. Gore's admirable report, in 1809, to Mr. Otis's excellent preamble to the resolutions appointing this Convention. Words are exhausted. We have said more than was said by all the public bodies in the United States prior to the Declaration of Independence.

I was opposed sincerely and most zealously to the Convention, because I found no one man among its advocates prepared to *act*. When you ask any of them what the Convention will do, you will find it is expected they will talk: talk of amendments, talk of militia, talk of defence, talk of being paid out of the national taxes what we advance, but nothing more.[2] I was not anxious for any decisive measures at present. I deprecate as one of the greatest of evils a separation of the States.[3] I thought, and think now, that the people *en masse* will act in six or twelve months more. I think the remedy *then* will be more effectual, and will produce more *lasting* good effects.

But I was wholly opposed to a premature and feeble effort.

[1] Benjamin Pickman, of Salem, a member of the Hartford Convention.

[2] Compare pp. 516–520.

[3] Compare pp. 529, 542.

Nothing sinks the character of a people, or diminishes the force and influence of a party, so much as suppressed efforts, vain and futile exertions.

For measures of wisdom and prudence, to be considered and adopted in common times of tranquillity, perhaps the choice could not have fallen on more suitable persons than those selected from our State.

Whatever they propose will be received with great respect by the people; and the boldest measures would be considered prudent, if suggested by them.

But they are not calculated for bold measures. Mr. Cabot is undoubtedly the wisest man in our State, or among the very wisest. He has the best stored mind of any man I ever saw, except Hamilton. He is a very practical man, well acquainted with every thing which concerns the best interests of a nation; but Mr. Cabot has been always a desponding man as to our public affairs, and their downward course has confirmed his opinions. He hardly thinks the temporary preservation of the State worth the effort, and he is most reluctantly dragged in like a conscript to the duty of a delegate. He has no confidence in the possibility of awakening the people. He will not, therefore, be in favor of any measures which will disturb our sleep. So at least I fear, for I cannot find out from him what his opinions are.

Mr. Otis is naturally timid, and frequently wavering, — to-day bold, and to-morrow like a hare trembling at every breeze. It would seem by his language that he is prepared for the very boldest measures, but he receives anonymous letters every day or two threatening him with bodily harm. It seems the other party suspect his firmness. He is sincere in wishing thorough measures, but a thousand fears restrain him.

Bigelow[1] is really bold on the present question, has a just confidence in the power of Massachusetts, sneers as he ought to do (and as I am sure I do) at all the threats of vengeance of the other States; and, if he was well supported, I have no doubt that measures of dignity and real relief would be adopted.

Prescott[2] is a firm man, but extremely prudent, and so modest

[1] Timothy Bigelow, Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

[2] William Prescott, son of Colonel Prescott, of Bunker Hill celebrity, and father of the historian, W. H. Prescott. He was a distinguished lawyer, and judge of the Court of Common Pleas for Suffolk.

that he will too readily yield his own opinions to the counsels of others whom he respects. I think he will give his aid to measures calculated to procure solid redress.

Mr. Dane[1] you know. He is a man of great firmness, approaching to obstinacy, singular, impracticable, and of course it must be uncertain what course he will take. Honestly, however, inclined.

Mr. Wilde,[2] of Kennebec, is a very able man, but one of very great caution and prudence. He lives among a people naturally bad and violent, and I should fear that his counsels may be influenced by that circumstance.

These are the men who will have the greatest influence in our delegation.

It is to be regretted that we had not chosen two or three such persons as Daniel Sargent, William Sullivan, and Colonel Thorndike. I do not know that we have among the delegates a single bold and ardent man. I know it will be said that such men are not the fittest for counsel. That is perhaps true in common times; but in times of great trouble they are often the most proper, and, indeed, the only ones fit to direct and manage affairs.

I should fear that the Connecticut delegation, though extremely respectable, was much of the same character.

If it is thought expedient that nothing decisive should be done, then it is to be regretted that so respectable a convention was called, because it tends to degrade and disgrace the members and the people who sent them.

But, if effectual measures were in contemplation, it is in my judgment to be regretted that some few more active and resolute men were not elected.

There does not seem to be any difference in opinion as to the extremely hazardous situation in which we are placed, nor as to the incapacity and injustice of our rulers, nor as to their having deserted us, and in effect abdicated the government, nor does there seem to be any hope of redress in a usual course. It is admitted, also, that pecuniary ruin is inevitable, and that there is a certainty of national disgrace, and some danger of attempts against our civil liberties. Yet people seem to have a dread of any effectual measures for relief.

[1] Nathan Dane. See note above, p. 533.

[2] Samuel Sumner Wilde. He was for thirty-five years a judge of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, and one of the greatest ornaments of that bench.

They tell you how divided we are, and how strong the party of government in other States. They pretend to fear a civil war, if we assert our rights.

My reply is, the state to which you are advancing in consequence of the measures of government will inevitably produce all the evils you dread of civil commotion and separation, besides the others of absolute pecuniary ruin and national disgrace; and, as to measures of relief, the people are ten times more likely to join you, if the measures you propose are practical, and bring them instant and perfect relief, than if you adopt circuitous political schemes to procure a distant and precarious one.

Hence a proposal to relieve them from taxes which go to support distant States, and to carry on a wicked and useless invasion, will be received with delight by men of all parties; and a truce or separate peace would be the most popular measure which could be devised.

If you have, then, settled in your consciences that the government cannot have a right to tax you, or force you to defend yourselves, when they have wickedly, purposely left you defenceless, what should prevent you from saving yourselves from destruction?

It is answered, the wrath of the Southern States, and the danger of your own minority.

As to the first, it is too ludicrous to require an answer. Under the best circumstances, it would be a pretty arduous undertaking for all the Southern States to attempt the conquest of New England, but, reduced as they now are to indigence, it would be more than Quixotic.

As to our own minority, there is nothing which will ever unite them to the majority so readily as laws to prevent the collection of the proposed United States taxes, and the levy of troops, and the declaration of neutrality.

What a satire it is that the moment the British take possession of any part of our country, and relieve it from the yoke of its own government, its inhabitants are happy and grow rich! Its lands rise in value, every species of property is enhanced in price, and the people deprecate the prospect of being *relieved* by their own government. Yet such is the fact, in the two lower counties of this State.

Let no man fear the discontents of our own people. They will hail such events as blessings.

But the permanent advantages of such measures will be greater than their immediate effects.

It is admitted by all persons that we must have some radical amendment of the Constitution as to slave representation, laws regulating trade, declaring war, &c. Can this ever be effected by CONVENTIONS, — by General Conventions? No: we shall be outvoted. But if you once take a stand, and say, "We go no longer on with you, unless you agree to these stipulations," you will SUCCEED. You must.

I would have it a *treaty*, not a *constitution*. The latter is mere paper, violated at pleasure by interested or ambitious men. But, when a treaty is broken, you know your remedy.

I would have the Northern States demand of the Southern States certain stipulations as parts of the compact, which should be duly signed by commissioners and ratified by the States respectively.

These, sir, are my loose ideas on this subject; but I have little, I may say no, hope that any thing will be done except,

1. An address to the people of the United States, as a general *exposé* of our grievances;

2. Proposals for amending the Constitution by general convention;

3. That Congress should be invited to permit us to pay our own expenses of defence out of the national tax.

This I believe is the project. I judge it only from the coldness with which my ideas are received, and some hints occasionally dropped.

Yours respectfully and sincerely, J. LOWELL.

MORRIS TO PICKERING.

DECEMBER 22, 1814.

I care nothing now about your actings and doings. Your decree of conscriptions and your levy of contributions are alike indifferent to one whose eyes are fixed on a Star in the East, which he believes to be the dayspring of freedom and glory. The traitors and madmen assembled at Hartford will, I believe, if not too tame and timid, be hailed hereafter as the patriots and sages of their day and generation. May the blessing of God be upon them, to inspire their counsels and prosper their resolutions.

Believe me always and truly yours, GOUV. MORRIS.

PICKERING TO HILLHOUSE.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, Dec. 16, 1814.

MY DEAR SIR, — I am now sitting alone in our old chamber in the "Six Buildings," from which we attacked the embargo, while you are in council with the wise men of the East. I do not consider the New England Convention as consulting for those States alone, but for the Federalists generally throughout the United States. In other words, I consider the interests of the great body (certainly the most valuable portion) of the people of the United States as resting on the result of your proceedings. I am sure there is no lack of wisdom: it would not be an easy matter to assemble an equal number of other citizens, where equal wisdom could be found. But a full knowledge of the evils demanding remedies, and a forcible representation of them, will make no impression on the hardened sinners upon whose heads those evils must be laid. I deprecate every thing which shall *simply be put on paper.* We have too long contented ourselves with memorials and remonstrances: they procure for us nought but contempt. And contempt from wretches in power, who are themselves so contemptible, is sufficiently provoking. When I look round me, and see vice and presumptuous ignorance triumphing over wisdom and virtue, — triumphing in cases involving the character and great interests of the country, and putting our liberties in jeopardy, — it is impossible to repress my indignant feelings. If the Convention leave us in this miserable situation, we may despair of the Commonwealth. Strong measures alone will procure relief. Their strength and boldness will render them efficient. From sound Federalists in this portion of the Union, I have for years heard only this declaration, "We look to New England for salvation."

I wished, my good friend, for an earlier interposition of New England to stay the hands of destroyers. *Obsta principiis* was the governing maxim, when we resisted incipient oppression by the mother country, — an oppression rather in *prospect* than in *action.* But for the last several years we have been submitting to one act of tyranny after another, until the people, familiarized to oppression, have their spirits depressed and humbled to a degree which, if longer borne, will render the cause of our country hopeless. It is necessary for the Convention to take those firm and decided steps which will rouse the people from the *spell* which, through an

unfounded fear of breaking the Union, the boldness and impudence of political mountebanks have imposed upon them. You have nothing to apprehend from the most imbecile of all governments, and certainly nothing from individual States. Those which eagerly approved the war are exhausted. Virginia cannot protect herself. Her militia have been called forth the past summer and autumn, and are thoroughly disgusted. Their rulers seem to have paid less attention to them than to their slaves. I have read a letter, dated at Richmond the 2d of November, from a senator in their State Legislature to his son-in-law in Congress, in which he says, "We have an army of militia, chiefly from twelve to ten miles below, who are generally very sickly, dying, and suffering for almost every military and camp accommodation." A very worthy and intelligent Virginian member of Congress, who has had a son (a lieutenant) with the militia at Norfolk, informs me that of the militia of that State, which has been called to the defence of Norfolk, between three and four thousand have perished. A letter from my friend, the Adjutant-General[1] of Massachusetts, recently received, informs me that of the three thousand six hundred militia called out by Governor Strong for the protection of Boston, and who were in service about two months, three only died, and one of the three from an injury received at home. I have read another letter, dated October 31, to the same member of Congress, from a respectable Virginia gentleman, who had then just been in the lower parts of the northern neck in Virginia, which had been visited by the British. He says: —

"You, believe me, can have no idea of the losses, sufferings, and dreadful distresses with which the inhabitants of it are encircled. The idea of the war's continuing fills them with complete horror. For they say, and truly, that the lakes, frontiers, fisheries, &c., are phantoms to them, when brought into competition with their exposed and ruined situation. In short, a more miserable, ill-fated, poor set of men never lived. I am confident, if some prompt and efficient measures are not adopted by Congress (for it seems the Virginia Legislature will not do any thing) for their relief, they will take care of themselves by entering into the best terms they can with the enemy."

"I admire greatly, indeed, the resolute conduct of Massachusetts and her sister States of the East. They have the firmness and the virtue, I am persuaded, to wield their counsels in such a manner

[1] General John Brooks.

as to compel the obdurate President and his execrable followers to abandon their foolish measures of conquest, and to withdraw our armies into the Union for the protection of the country."

The writer subjoined to his letter what follows: "Your old acquaintance, Colonel John Taylor,[1] of Caroline, is out of all kind of patience with Madison and his party. He declares that the government is positively *mad*, and that the British will another summer get this whole lower country: this he said yesterday."

It seems to be the opinion (certainly the fearful apprehension) of Western men that New Orleans will be taken by the British. If well conducted, the expedition can hardly fail. If it succeeds, it will be with a view to hold it; and hold it they will, against the whole force of the Western States, such is the nature of the ground on the Isle of Orleans. For about thirty miles above the city, the strip of land is but a mile wide, between the Mississippi and impassable swamps. This fact has been stated to me by Mr. Brown, one of the senators from Louisiana. I asked him the question, whether, if once in possession of Orleans City, the British could be expelled? He answered, "It would be extremely difficult to dislodge them." I am confident it will be impracticable. It will be easy to erect an impassable barrier from the river to the swamp. And their armed vessels and boats on the river would render the post unassailable by water. On the other side of the city, the creek (bayou St. John) connected with Lake Pontchartrain approaches within four or five miles. But this also, according to my information, will give no room for an enemy to land, being so easily defended. And it is for this reason concluded that the British will make their attempt by ascending the Mississippi.

From the moment the British possess New Orleans, the Union is severed. They will not intermeddle with the governments of the Western States: these will be told to manage their own affairs in their own way. New Orleans will be the market for all their productions, which will be transported in British ships to every country in the world where there is a demand for them. Their tobacco will find a market in Europe. Their cotton will all be wanted in the British manufactories, and their hemp for their ships. Their flour, when they shall have improved their mills, and their beef and pork when they shall have learned better to cure and pack them, will go wherever men want food. What now constitutes

[1] See above, p. 442.

the State of Louisiana will be changed to a *province*, with a *legitimate* annexation of West Florida by cession from Spain. The bulk of the inhabitants, bred under monarchies, will not dislike the change; while the whole population, French, Spaniards, and Americans, finding themselves in the possession of self-government to every useful purpose, under a provincial Legislature, with a British governor (who, from the immense importance of the charge, will be one of their ablest men), will be *quite as well* satisfied (I am sure they will have reason to be so) as with the creature first imposed on them by Jefferson, and since continued by the votes of the busy electioneering portion of the people, who are not seldom their own worst enemies.

The Western people will have no choice; and, after a little experience, they will not be displeased with their new situation. Their products will probably find more extensive markets than they would as members of our Union. When peace takes place, should the cottons of Carolina and Georgia interfere with theirs in the British markets, a small extra duty may be imposed on the former. The incalculable advantages Great Britain will derive from the acquisition of Orleans will induce her to cherish the good-will of the Western people. This, indeed, will require no more than a reasonable attention to their interests, and this again will best promote those of Great Britain.

Thus will Great Britain be virtually possessed of immensely rich provinces, increasing in population more rapidly than ever, without the trouble and expense of governing and defending them.

This severance will of course annihilate the *war debt*. The Western States will also take to themselves all the public lands; while they will excuse themselves from paying any part of the debt of our Revolution, for which those lands were pledged. Their annual sales will yield a revenue equal to the maintenance of all their State governments.

Such are my speculations, arising out of the present state of things. And, should the British succeed at New Orleans, I shall consider the views I have here exhibited as *pro facto* realized. In one or two years, if the whole were left to the choice of the Western people, prompted by the most powerful interests, they would adopt them, while at the instant they must yield to necessity. And, as in their whole intercourse with those who at present

are enemies, they will hear and read the English language only, they will soon forget that they had not always been one nation.

One more remark: should the severance above mentioned take place, from that moment the necessity of union among the Atlantic States will strike every man who thinks, as forcibly as during our Revolution; and the feebleness of the States south of the Potomac will urge them to cling to those of the North, as the Connecticut vine to the tree which supports it. The terms of a new compact will be adapted to this new state of things.

I am, &c., T. PICKERING.

PICKERING TO CABOT.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, Dec. 31, 1814.

DEAR SIR, — It is a good while since I troubled you with a letter, because your own reflections run before mine, even when I fall into the same track. I now write to communicate some short extracts from a letter of the 22d instant from Gouverneur Morris, in answer to one from me of the 15th. These extracts exhibit the high expectations formed by him of the result of the deliberations of the Hartford Convention. He is not singular in his expectations, accompanied with some apprehensions that the result will not rise to the existing emergency and impending prospects.

I stated to Mr. Morris that John Francis Mercer[1] (who, I believe, was in Congress in Philadelphia while you were a member of the Senate) said, in a letter which I had read, that the clause in the Constitution giving power to Congress "to borrow money," ran originally, "To borrow money and emit bills of credit;" and was struck out on the motion of Mr. Morris, after a full discussion, the question being carried "almost by acclamation." Mr. Morris does not recollect it, but says a proposition to issue paper money must have met with all the opposition he could make, because leading to a violation of contracts. I had remarked in my letter that treasury notes were paper money, or bills of credit. He says: "It is too late to examine the nature of treasury notes. Their race is run. Your new bank is a new folly. Your taxes will not sustain your system. Paper money will issue, and plunge you still deeper in distress. All the schemes hitherto proposed are

[1] Mr. Mercer was member of Congress from Maryland, in 1792-1794, and afterwards governor of the State.

inefficient. Do not ask me why, for I will not discuss a subject which is no longer of importance. When the North and the East cast off the old form, if the new one they put on be good, they shall not suffer on the score of finance."

"I care nothing now about your actings and doings. Your decree of conscriptions and your levy of contributions are alike indifferent to one whose eyes are fixed on a Star in the East, which he believes to be the dayspring of freedom and glory. The traitors and madmen assembled at Hartford will, I believe, if not too tame and timid, be hailed hereafter as the patriots and sages of their day and generation. May the blessing of God be upon them, to inspire their counsels and prosper their resolutions."

In adverting to the discussions at Ghent, Mr. Morris says, "I thought the enemy's first overture should have been seized." So I thought, and so wrote to Governor Strong and Mr. Lowell, as soon as I had read the first despatches, and was happy to find a perfect agreement in our opinions. It is now too late. The *uti possidetis* (with some modifications) will be the basis of the final negotiations. If the British take New Orleans, they will hold it, and thus command the productions and commerce of a country worth ten Canadas. It is possible they may then relinquish the country east of Penobscot River. On the subject of the British capturing New Orleans and its consequences, I wrote on the 16th of the month to my friend Hillhouse. I do not know that he has received it.

The majority in the House were determined to pass the bank-bill (fifty millions capital) yesterday, and were reluctantly induced to adjourn after the death of the Virginia senator, Brent, had been officiallly announced. The Virginia representatives themselves (with one or two exceptions) voted against adjourning,—the pretence, with the majority, because the official message was delivered by the Senate's Secretary, *verbally;* and the majority had again called up the bill, when a letter from the senatorial committee of arrangement for the funeral, brought up and handed to the Speaker by a member of the House (who suspected foul management, and therefore went for it), being read, they could resist no longer, and adjourned. On Monday a decision will doubtless take place. In the mean time, an attempt will be made for a compromise, of a bank with twenty-five millions capital, on proper banking principles; but, as this could not supply the government

with thirty millions of dollars on loan, the compromise will probably not take place.

I am, dear sir, faithfully yours, T. PICKERING.

PICKERING TO STRONG.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, Jan. 9, 1815.

DEAR SIR, — . . . Another subject of the first magnitude claims attention, — the British expedition to New Orleans. I expect they will take it; and, if they take it, they will hold it. It will constitute the main article of the rule of pacification, — *uti possidetis*. A severance of the Union will inevitably follow. The train of consequences, as I have a good while since stated them to my friends in conversation, I will take the liberty of presenting to your view, in the course of one or two days.

I have the honor to be very respectfully, dear sir,

Your obedient servant, TIMOTHY PICKERING.

PICKERING TO STRONG.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, Jan. 10, 1815.

DEAR SIR, — In a short letter of yesterday, I mentioned my intention of presenting to you the view I had taken of the British expedition to New Orleans, and its consequences.

Although rumor announced New Orleans as the object of the British armaments preparing in England and Ireland, I had not turned my thoughts that way, until I read Admiral Cochrane's letter of the 17th of September to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, giving an account of the expedition against Baltimore. He says, "the approaching equinoctial new moon rendering it unsafe to proceed immediately *out of the Chesapeake* with the *combined expedition*, to act upon the plans which had been concerted previous to the departure of the "Iphigenia," &c., he and General Ross resolved to employ the interval "in making a demonstration upon the city of Baltimore, which might be converted into a real attack," &c. No object of magnitude for a great and "combined expedition out of the Chesapeake" occurring, except New Orleans, I concluded that to be its destination. Instantly, the powerful inducements to undertake it, on the part of Great Britain, and the consequences to the United States, rushed into my mind.

The collected force, compared with the means of defence, gave a moral certainty of success. The place captured will be held. So costly an armament is not designed to gain a pledge for a peace. Permanent dominion is in view. Last summer I entertained the opinion that Great Britain, without indulging a spirit of resentment and revenge, would look forward to her *lasting interests* (which I considered as involved in a renewal and continuance of a free and extensive commercial intercourse with the United States), and make peace; only maintaining, in their full extent, her maritime rights. But now these rights are not contested by the United States. The return of peace will of course restore commerce, the exchange of commodities commensurate with our wants; and, by the conquest of New Orleans, Great Britain, without losing her commerce with the Atlantic States, will engross the commerce of the Western States and Territories, increasing and multiplying so long as vacant lands remain. One objection occurred to this immense project: that, as the European nations were endeavoring to adjust a balance of power, the acquisition of the Western World by Great Britain might give umbrage to her neighbors, especially to the maritime powers. But a moment's reflection obviated this objection. Great Britain will be wise enough to limit her *actual, formal dominion* to the *State of Louisiana*, which she will convert into a *province*, holding the Isle of Orleans and the portion of the State westward of the Mississippi by right of conquest, and the portion eastward of the river (West Florida) by cession from Spain. The States and Territories above the State of Louisiana she will leave to govern themselves. She will have no interest to intermeddle in their internal affairs: she wants nothing of them but their productions: and these she can command, without making one effort or even issuing one order, for that purpose. She need only tell them: "New Orleans is your market. I want your tobacco for the European consumption, your hemp for my ships, your cotton for my manufactories: your flour, beef, and pork for my own colonies (where they would be admitted in vessels of the United States, only in cases of scarcity), and for all other colonies and countries where men want food. You are now independent in your governments: continue so. I have no interest or desire to interfere. With British manufactures and all foreign articles of merchandise, I will supply you at the first hand, and unburthened with the enormous duties and imposts laid upon them in the Atlantic States:

what imposts shall be charged will be comparatively small. Speaking the same language, you will find the same facility of intercourse at New Orleans, as if the same had continued a part of the United States. Besides, the Americans now there, and all others from your countries or from the Atlantic States who choose to remain or to resort there, will enjoy equal advantages with British subjects."

Under such circumstances, why should the Western people hesitate a moment? Their interests would compel their acquiescence, and soon, very soon, their inclinations would concur with their interests. Perhaps they would form a new confederacy. But confederated or severally independent, being in possession of the vacant public lands, they can appropriate them to their own uses exclusively. If they admit the Atlantic States to any participation, it will be well; but our *right* to it would not be *enforced*. Those lands annually sold will defray all the expenses of their several governments, and exempt the people from taxes. They may also throw off the public debt, and thus rid themselves of the oppressive taxes, which its payment would require. With all these advantages, migration from the Atlantic States will continue, and with large increase. With this severance of the Union, I expect, indeed, the *war debt* will be *annihilated*. This will not grieve *me*. The debt of the Revolution I view in a different light: it was the price of the independence of the thirteen Atlantic States. These will remain united, or reunite and provide for that debt. I also conclude that, in the event of the separation of the Western States, those on the Atlantic will be more closely united than ever, and by a new compact, to obviate the evils which experience has shown may be introduced under that now existing.

I am, dear sir, most respectfully yours,

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

GORE[1] TO STRONG.

WASHINGTON CITY Jan. 14, 1815.

MY DEAR SIR, — The bill for State troops[2] has passed the House with an amendment to the only section interesting to us, said not to be important.

[1] At this time Senator from Massachusetts.

[2] This was the measure which the Hartford Convention demanded as necessary to the defence of the New England States.

The result of the Hartford Convention is here, and affords satisfaction to most, if not to all, — to some, because they see not the point nor consequence of the recommendation as relates to taxes.

The gentlemen had a difficult task, which, according to my poor judgment, they have executed with wisdom and discretion.

With great respect, I remain, my dear sir,

Your faithful friend and obedient servant, C. Gore.

Gore to Strong.

Jan. 17, 1815.

My dear Sir, — I received your favor from North Hampton, and, in common with all good men, rejoice that you allow me to indulge the hope you will continue where you are during the war; indeed, I consider your term of enlistment to be for and during the war. If peace ever arrive in our day, I shall consider some of our evils removed, and all will be changed.

I wish I could perceive the smallest chance of doing good here. We can only look for a change of miseries. What will follow these, now endured, it is not easy to conjecture.

I remain, dear sir, your faithful friend, C. Gore.

Extract from a Letter of Dr. Logan to Pickering.

Jan. 19, 1815.

I have with pleasure perused the proceedings of the Hartford Convention. The prudence and magnanimity of that body does the greatest credit to its patriotic spirit, and may afford a rallying point to our distracted country. It appears nothing of wisdom can be expected from our public councils at Washington.

Gore to Strong.

Georgetown, Jan. 22, 1815.

My dear Sir, — The Congress have passed the bank bill, as it last came from the House of Representatives. There is some question whether the President will sign the act. This doubt arises from its not containing a clause authorizing the issue of notes, which the corporation shall be under no obligation to meet with specie.

Mr. Dallas has proposed to raise five millions of dollars more for the current year. Three millions of this to be on income. This is a direct tax, and, if assessed, must be apportioned on the States, according to the Constitution. He proposes a tax of one dollar per barrel on flour, in the hands of the miller. He proposes a further stamp duty: viz., on all bonds, mortgages, conveyances of every kind, policies of insurance, bottomry bonds, &c.; on wills and testaments, inventories of the estates of deceased persons, distributions and successions, — that is to say, legacies and devises, property by descent, &c. Mortified with the failure of his scheme of a bank, he may have done this with the view of pressing Congress to emit bills of credit, or to pass some bill supplemental to the act instituting a bank, authorizing that institution to issue their notes, and loan to government a large sum in bills, which the corporation shall not be obliged to redeem with specie.

These appear to me the spasms of a dying government. From New Orleans we have nothing further than what the newspapers afford. Our last accounts from that place are only to the morning of the 24th of December.

The bill authorizing the raising of State troops by the States, and at the expense of the United States, according to the plan sent you some time since, has passed both Houses. Thus one part of the recommendation of the Hartford Convention seems to be adopted. The other, that to authorize the States to receive the taxes, will probably be more difficult to be attained. The accession to this seems not to accord with Mr. Monroe's intimation in your letter, or rather in his letter to you. Indeed, if they have fears of the State governments, one can hardly account for this government's authorizing the States to raise and keep in pay at the expense of the United States troops which may be used for purposes hostile to or not conformable with the views of the paymaster.

I remain, my dear sir, very truly your faithful friend and obedient servant, C. GORE.

PICKERING TO LOWELL.

CITY OF WASHINGTON, Jan. 23, 1815.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 16th inst. I regret that I did not acknowledge the receipt of your very interesting confidential letter of December 3d, and thus have prevented the anxiety which the omission has occasioned. It

seemed that I might have communicated some parts of it to particular friends; but it has so happened that I remain the sole depositary of its contents, and *now* no motive occurs to me for divulging any of your sentiments.

I believe that some of my very cautious friends and acquaintances think me too ardent in whatever pursuits of a public nature my attention becomes engaged, and hence it may have been supposed that I was not quite satisfied with the doings of the Convention. The fact, however, is otherwise; and, as you have been pleased to ask my opinion, I will express it with my habitual frankness.

I think the report of the Convention bears the high character of wisdom, firmness, and dignity. They have explicitly pronounced sentence of condemnation upon a miserable administration, and, stamped as it is with the authority of a body of men so eminently distinguished, that judgment cannot fail of making a just impression where it is needed. They have made a declaration of *principles* the landmarks by which Legislatures and the people may direct their course. And they have, in terms that none can mistake, and which our rulers, whatever for a time they may effect, will not venture to disregard, manifested a determination to apply those principles in corresponding measures, when the future conduct or neglects of the government shall require their application.

In their proposed amendments of the Constitution, I have the satisfaction to find that all, save that which regards the admission of new States into the Union, were among those which I took the liberty to intimate to you in my letter of the 28th of November. One which I had deemed of vital importance is omitted, that respecting *the appointment of public officers.* I was aware of its intrinsic difficulties; while the observation of fourteen years had convinced me that it was the great instrument of corruption, and more than all other means had confirmed and extended the power and influence of the executive. Probably the Convention thought that the limitation of the President's power by a single election, both as to the person and the State from which he should be taken, would furnish an adequate check. Or it might be among the number of further amendments alluded to as expedient, but under the circumstances mentioned less urgent than the others, and therefore not explicitly stated.

With regard to the admission of new States into the Union, events with which the present moment is teeming may take away

the subject itself. If the British succeed in their expedition against New Orleans, — and, if they have tolerable leaders, I see no reason to doubt of their success, — I shall consider the Union as severed. This consequence I deem inevitable. I do not expect to see a single representative in the next Congress from the Western States. Those States, with the Territories, will be under the necessity of being at peace with the British; and they will make a virtue of necessity, and this necessity they will soon find to have materially promoted their interests. All the public lands west of the Alleghany Mountains will go with them. Migrations thither from all the Eastern States have been constant during the war, and its continuance will increase them. But, without entering farther on this subject, permit me to refer you to a late letter from me to Governor Strong, in which I have sketched the great and, in my view, certain consequences of the capture of Orleans. Indeed, I *wish* you to read it. Yours, &c., &c., TIMOTHY PICKERING.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF HILLHOUSE TO PICKERING.

FEB. 7, 1815.

I was much gratified to find that the doings of the Convention met general approbation, and more especially of a friend whose judgment and opinion I hold in such high estimation.

GORE TO STRONG.

WASHINGTON CITY, Feb. 18, 1815.

MY DEAR SIR, — The newspapers will inform you, before this reaches Boston, that the treaty of peace was ratified yesterday.

If there be any papers which show the number of inhabitants on Moose Island, which I cannot but consider is gone from the United States and from Massachusetts, I will thank you, if you will direct them to be sent to me.

The treaty must be deemed disgraceful to the government who made the war and the peace, and will be so adjudged by all, after the first effusions of joy at relief have subsided.

The bill herewith enclosed has passed the Senate unanimously, and I hope may be found to afford us some compensation for our expenses.

With great respect and affectionate regard,

I remain, my dear sir, your faithful servant, C. GORE.

CHAPTER XIV.

1815–1823.

Last Years of Mr. Cabot's Life. — Withdrawal from Politics. — Occupations. — Illness and Death. — Personal Appearance. — Private Character. — Political Opinions. — Influence in the Community. — Respect in which he was held. — Religious Belief. — Conclusion.

THE Hartford Convention was the occasion of Mr. Cabot's last appearance in any public capacity. His life of leisure and retirement, which, despite his efforts, had been occasionally interrupted by the disturbing politics of the day up to 1815, flowed on after that time in unbroken quiet. Even his correspondence ceased. Almost all his old friends had now like himself retired from public life, many of his former associates were dead, and nothing remained to spur his indolence in regard to letter-writing to even an occasional burst of activity. One letter only remains of a date subsequent to that of the Hartford Convention, addressed to his friend Colonel Pickering, before the latter's term as a member of Congress expired. Colonel Pickering wrote to ask Mr. Cabot's opinion on a question of political economy, and the reply seems incidentally to embody the result of the latter's experience and thought on the great subjects of free trade and protection. The question is still an open one; and Mr. Cabot's views have, therefore, not only an historical, but to some extent a practical, value. Hamiltonian as he had always been in his political feelings, it will be seen that Mr. Cabot was, nevertheless, convinced of the soundness of free-trade doctrines, and assented to but a very moderate use of protection, and then only in exceptional cases.

Pickering to Cabot.

City of Washington, Dec. 14, 1815.

Dear Sir, — Some petitions have already been presented to the House of Representatives, and more are expected, the object of which is to obtain a repeal of the laws imposing duties on some of our manufactures, and the enactment of other laws to impose or increase duties on certain manufactures imported from foreign countries, or absolutely to prohibit their introduction into the United States; of the latter, particularly to interdict the importation of all cotton goods (nankeens excepted), the production of countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope, and to augment the duty on those of coarse texture imported from other parts of the world.

This whole subject will come under consideration in the Committee of Ways and Means; and the chairman of that committee (Mr. Lowndes, of South Carolina) has spoken to me, desiring to obtain information particularly as to the probable effects of such prohibition in relation to cotton goods on the *navigation* of the United States. He had understood that, besides *silver*, various articles entering into our commerce with the East Indies were carried thither by our own merchant vessels, and exchanged for their cottons. Now, if the prohibition of these cottons would materially affect our shipping and seamen, this would constitute a serious objection to a compliance with the manufacturer's petitions. For it seems to be desired that our navigation should by all proper means be encouraged and increased.

I told Mr. Lowndes[1] that for myself I possessed very little knowledge on the subject, but I could obtain information from the best sources. He wished me to do it. And this is the object of the present letter. The subject is important, and especially interesting to Massachusetts. I must therefore pray you to commit to writing your views of it, and in such form as I may be allowed to communicate the same to Mr. Lowndes. The information from you will be peculiarly valuable; for, besides having a perfect knowledge of the subject, you are not personally engaged in commerce, and are therefore exempt from that insensible bias which not infrequently warps the opinions of upright men, who have a material interest at stake.

[1] Member of Congress from South Carolina.

It would seem manifestly proper to abolish the duties on our own manufactures generally, those on distilled spirits and snuff and perhaps on refined sugar excepted. But the natural consequence of prohibiting the importation of cottons (nankeens excepted) from the East Indies, and those of coarse texture from Europe, would be the deterioration of our own cotton fabrics, while their prices might be double those of East India and coarse texture cottons. Besides, many of the cotton factories were established (particularly in Rhode Island) prior to the imposition of the double duties, and yet they flourished. How, then, are they to be ruined, unless the prohibitions and additional duties prayed for be enacted? I recollect to have heard (I do not know how truly stated) that one of the principals in the Providence cotton factories had several years ago risen, from small beginnings, to a property of upwards of a hundred thousand pounds.

If the duties actually imposed on foreign cotton goods, or on any other imported manufactures, will not enable our own manufactories to continue their operations with a reasonable profit, ought additional duties to be laid to burden the whole community for their support? Where in any of our manufactories imported articles now charged with duties are necessary to their operations, such duties might be abolished, in cases when the abolition was requisite to afford the manufacturer a reasonable profit. In all other cases, if they cannot support themselves, it would prove that they have been prematurely and imprudently undertaken.

Have the goodness to favor me with an early answer.

Very sincerely and respectfully yours, T. PICKERING.

CABOT TO PICKERING.

DEC. 20, 1815.

MY DEAR SIR, — I should feel unhappy, if I did not believe you will forgive me when I reply to your letters of the 14th and 15th, *that I cannot execute the task you prescribed.* If indeed I attempted it, I could do little more than elucidate the leading ideas you have already suggested. It is admitted that a government may wisely assist the maintenance of some branches of industry indispensable to national defence; and it is conceivable that the public interest might dictate a grant of public aid in the introduction of a manufacture of peculiar difficulty, where its establishment would certainly be of lasting benefit to the community, but where the undertaking

might be too perilous for private enterprise. It is not to be expected, however, that our people would long acquiesce in any system which should take money from their pockets to sustain a particular class, unless the service of these was palpably essential to some general interest of primary importance. It becomes every day better understood that manufactures which require *permanent* aid for their support are not consistent with good economy. They must retard the progress of wealth and diminish the proportion of comfort to the laborer. To sell dear and buy cheap is obviously for our interest: the widest market and freest competition secure these in the best manner.

Although the manufacturers of cotton goods ask for a prohibition of similar articles from India, and a high duty on those from Europe, yet I should think *they would be well satisfied with a high duty on all imported*, especially as they might rely on the continuance of duties which would be profitable to the treasury. On the other hand, a prohibition would disaffect ship-owners as well as consumers. Our trade beyond the GREAT CAPES is very great, and is daily increasing. About one hundred vessels (beside the whalemen) are supposed to have gone from the United States, and others are preparing. In twenty-six vessels from Salem, one million three hundred thousand dollars in specie have been exported, averaging fifty thousand dollars to a vessel. In the same ratio, one hundred vessels would have carried five millions in silver from the United States since the peace. It is well known that in this trade we export but little value beside silver, and therefore the return cargo alone must yield the profit. A few of the vessels to Calcutta have carried miscellaneous cargoes from hence, and others take wines from Madeira and Teneriffe, while some take their dollars at Lisbon and Cadiz. But why should not dollars be as free for exportation as any imported articles? If no other currency than specie or its representative, which is the same thing *in effect*, is admitted in our country, there will be always enough for this purpose remain here. The necessity of retaining it for domestic uses will retain enough for those uses, and will regulate its importation and exportation as it now does coffee and sugar. The coin of each country is dependent for its value on the fact that the metals of which it is composed are the money of the world. In other words, the money of each place has its value supported by its uniform price as merchandise (bullion) in all places.

You will be surprised perhaps that the India traders and those round Cape Horn should not average more than fifty thousand dollars; but you will recollect that the North-west ships carry no silver, and ten or fifteen of these are included in the estimate of one hundred. The Calcutta and Canton ships are the only ones that carry out large amounts of silver: some of these carry two or three hundred thousand dollars, but the other Indiamen have seldom more than fifty thousand. The pepper ships at Sumatra find thirty, forty, or fifty thousand dollars amply sufficient to load them. There are many in this trade, some of which having sailed from hence last spring are at this moment vending their pepper in the Mediterranean, where we have sometimes procured dollars again for a succeeding voyage to India, or brought them home. Thus you see how circuitously our commerce winds about, supplying every want and taking away every surplus our eagle-eyed merchants can discover on the globe. I pray that Congress may leave it as free as possible. I have now filled two pages to testify anew the sincere respect and regard of

Your unfeigned friend, G. C.

Mr. Cabot's occupations during the last years of his life were of the same nature as those which had engaged him ever since his retirement from the Senate of the United States. As president of the Boston Marine Insurance Company, he had enough business to take him every day to the resorts of merchants, among whom he had many friends, and whose pursuits had once been his own. This occupied his morning. The rest of the day was devoted to reading and study and to intercourse with his friends. His house was rarely without visitors in the evening, for he was a man whose society was much sought and highly esteemed. His last years were not clouded by any domestic grief. His only daughter Elizabeth still remained at home; his wife was spared to him; and his son Henry, now married, lived near him. His son's marriage brought him grandchildren, to the eldest of whom, a little girl, he was most fondly attached. In this happy way the years glided by. They yielded to Mr. Cabot every thing that he most valued:

sufficient occupation, the quiet of his library, opportunity for reflection and thought, the constant presence of those dearest to him, the society of friends, and the honor and respect of the community in which he dwelt.

In 1821, Mr. Cabot was first attacked by the malady which afterwards proved fatal. His disease was the stone, from which the suffering was at times extreme; but he bore with perfect fortitude and without a murmur all the acute physical anguish to which he was subjected. His illness lasted for nearly two years; and on April 18, 1823, he died, meeting death with the same calmness and composure that he had exhibited in all the trials of life.

The letters which form the larger part of this volume have given, I trust, a clear idea both of Mr. Cabot's mental powers and of his cast of mind and thought; while the friendships which he formed and retained, the public offices he was called upon to fill, and the respect with which he was regarded by the community in which he lived, are the best test of the estimation of his abilities and character held by his contemporaries. Yet I am unwilling to close this final chapter without an attempt at least to give from the scanty materials at my command some better picture of Mr. Cabot than political letters alone can furnish.

For personal appearance, I am compelled to rely on verbal description; since Mr. Cabot after he reached maturity could never be persuaded to sit for his portrait. He had an almost morbid aversion to any thing that seemed to partake of vanity or publicity; and he seems to have thought that in his own case, though not in that of his friends, a portrait was open to both these objections. In person, Mr. Cabot was tall, measuring more than six feet, and was large and powerfully built. He was considered handsome, and his contemporaries speak of his expression as one of great dignity and repose. He had a low, musical voice, but one of great power and very attractive, it is said, to those who listened. His manners were gentle and courteous to one

and all. I am indebted to Miss Quincy, the oldest daughter of the late President Quincy, one of Mr. Cabot's most valued friends, for a description of his personal appearance in the last years of his life. Miss Quincy's family occupied a pew next to Mr. Cabot's, and she saw him therefore every Sunday for many years. She has told me that he made a great impression on her mind at this time; and she describes him as a tall and very handsome man, though at that time of course well advanced in years. He was still, however, perfectly erect and noticeable in appearance. He wore his hair without powder, but drawn back and tied in a queue in the fashion of his younger days. He dressed generally in black, and never abandoned the even then bygone fashion of knee-breeches and silk stockings. Mr. Goodrich in his "Recollections" has given a description of Mr. Cabot as he appeared at the time of the Hartford Convention.[1] He says: —

"The most imposing man among them [the members of the Hartford Convention] was George Cabot, the president. He was over six feet in height, broad-shouldered, and of a manly step. His hair was white, — for he was past sixty, — his eye blue, his complexion slightly florid. He seemed to me like Washington, — as if the great man, as painted by Stuart, had walked out of the canvas, and lived and breathed among us. He was, in fact, Washingtonian in his whole air and bearing, as was proper for one who was Washington's friend, and who had drunk deep at the same fountain — that of the Revolution — of the spirit of truth, honor, and patriotism. In aspect and appearance, he was strikingly dignified; and such was the effect of his presence that in a crowded room, and amid other men of mark, when you once became conscious he was there, you could hardly forget it. You seemed always to see him, — as the traveller in Switzerland sees Mont Blanc towering above other mountains around him wherever he may be. And yet he was easy and gracious in his manners, his countenance wearing a calm but radiant cheerfulness, especially

[1] "Recollections of a Lifetime," by S. G. Goodrich (Peter Parley), II. 36. Mr. Goodrich's description relieves me from any fear that I have been partial in my own.

when he spoke. He was celebrated for his conversational powers; and I often remarked that, when he began to converse, all eyes and ears turned toward him, as if eager to catch the music of his voice and the light of his mind."

Mr. Cabot's conversational powers, of which Mr. Goodrich speaks in so laudatory a fashion, must have been not a little remarkable; for they appear to have deeply impressed, even from his earliest years, all with whom he came in contact. Despite great natural advantages, Mr. Cabot was never an orator, and always was averse to speaking in public. When he did speak, it was with simplicity and clearness; but the eloquence which he possessed was reserved for conversation. To his friends, he poured forth the results of patient thought and study in well-chosen language, enhanced by the charms of a graceful manner and a fine voice. There was much conversation in those days, and a man who excelled in it exercised no small power over his circle. But conversation requires exactness of thought and learning, and affords no opportunity to hide ignorance under oratorical flourishes or vague and glittering similes. It is therefore in some respects a more difficult art than oratory, and requires a certain solidity which success in the latter does not necessarily imply. Thackeray has said, "We no longer travel: we arrive." And speed, which has so much injured travel, has also infected every department of modern life. We may not unfairly say, "We no longer converse: we talk." This does not mean necessarily that thought has deteriorated, or that "talk" is less good than "conversation;" but the interchange of ideas, the discussion implied by the latter, has lost much of its deliberation and its gravity in the former. The conversation of seventy-five years ago, though both wise and witty, was often a more serious affair, and was tried by a higher standard than we now perhaps realize. Mr. James Hamilton has preserved in his Reminiscences an anecdote which illustrates what our ancestors meant by after-dinner conversation, though that

particular species certainly was never professedly on weighty subjects. Mr. Hamilton says: —

"This [a story of Gouverneur Morris] reminds me of what George Cabot told me when I was staying at his house in Boston: 'I never give dinners; but Morris came to Boston, and having known him well in the good old times I felt it due to him to make up a party for him. I invited Fisher Ames to meet him, with Harrison Gray Otis and others of that stamp. After the cloth was removed, I introduced as a subject of conversation, "How long can Great Britain sustain her load of debt?" I briefly expressed my own views. All waited to hear Morris, who with great force and knowledge of the subject presented his. When he had finished, there was a pause: we drank, and all eyes were turned to Ames, who was admitted to be our best talker. As you know, he was then in feeble health; and he began in his low, melodious tone, with evident weakness, to express his views, which differed widely from those of Morris. He was thoroughly acquainted with the subject, which, by the way, was very frequently discussed at that time, and talked in his best vein with singular clearness and eloquence. Morris was all attention. I watched him closely. The first clear indication on his countenance of what was passing in his mind was, — "He talks well." The next, "He talks as well as I do." And at last, as Ames warmed with his subject, "He talks better than I do."'

"Cabot I remember well. He was one of the best talkers of the day, and one of the most intelligent, upright, amiable, and excellent of men."[1]

The persiflage and repartee of the present day were not then looked upon as the chief merit of conversation, and to be a recognized leader in that art required more than a lively and vivacious wit alone could furnish. Mr. Cabot was not only noted in social converse, but his extensive information on questions of government and political economy, together with a varied experience of the world, made him the trusted adviser of many men in public life as well as of those who took counsel with him on their private affairs. Mr. Webster says: —

[1] Reminiscences of J. A. Hamilton, pp. 12, 13.

"To these endeavors to maintain a sound currency, I owe the acquaintance and friendship of the late Mr. Cabot, who was kind enough to think me entitled to his regard." [1]

Many letters whose publication would have only encumbered these pages show the reliance which was placed in him as to all matters demanding foresight and judgment.

Nor were such appeals ever made in vain. Mr. Cabot's kindness and urbanity are mentioned by all who knew him; and he was moreover charitable and benevolent to everybody who required assistance of any kind. No one who has read the preceding letters can fail to have perceived the over-sensitive modesty, the retiring and even indolent disposition, which withdrew Mr. Cabot at an early period from active political life. To these traits of character is due the almost complete destruction of his extensive and valuable correspondence, a loss bitterly to be regretted by his descendants at least. Yet one of his old party allies considered him dangerously ambitious. In the recently published Life of Mr. George Ticknor, the following amusing anecdote is related. When the Hartford Convention was sitting, Mr. Ticknor went to Quincy to receive some letters of introduction from John Adams.

"Soon after I was seated in Mr. Adams's parlor," to quote his own words, "where there was no one but himself and Mrs. Adams, who was knitting, he began to talk of the condition of the country, with great earnestness. I said not a word; Mrs. Adams was equally silent. But Mr. Adams, who was a man of strong and prompt passions, went on more and more vehemently. He was dressed in a single-breasted, dark green coat, buttoned tightly by very large, white metal buttons over his somewhat rotund person. As he grew more and more excited in his discourse, he impatiently endeavored to thrust his hand into the breast of his coat. The buttons did not yield readily; at last he *forced* his hand, saying as he did so, in a very loud voice and most excited manner, 'Thank God, thank God! George Cabot's close-buttoned ambition has broke out at last: he wants to be President of New England, sir!'"

[1] Private Correspondence of Daniel Webster, I. 26.

Mr. Adams's suspicions of Mr. Cabot's deep-rooted and carefully hidden ambition were, however, of much earlier date. Writing to his wife, in 1797, soon after Mr. Cabot's retirement from the Senate, he says: —

"Mr. Madison is to retire. It seems the mode of becoming great is to retire. Madison, I suppose, after a retirement of a few years, is to be President or Vice-President. Mr. Cabot, I suppose, after aggrandizing his character in the shade a few years, is to be some great thing too; and Mr. Ames, &c., &c. It is marvellous how political plants grow in the shade. Continued daylight and sunshine show our faults and record them. Our persons, voices, clothes, gait, air, sentiments, &c., all become familiar to every eye and ear and understanding; and they diminish in proportion, upon the same principle that no man is a hero to his wife or valet-de-chambre. These gentlemen are in the right to run away and hide. Tell Mr. Cabot so, if you see him. His countrymen will soon believe him to be a giant in a cave, and will go in a body and dig him out. I wish, but don't tell Cabot so, that they would dig up GERRY!"[1]

There was but little love lost, it is to be feared, between Mr. Adams and Mr. Cabot. Their friendly intercourse ceased at the time of the Hamiltonian controversy; but they always maintained an attitude of silent and dignified hostility, and Mr. Adams had previously shown his respect for Mr. Cabot's character and talents by appointing him to a seat in his cabinet.

Of Mr. Cabot's political views, the letters in this volume are the best index. A patriot in the Revolution, he was one of the most ardent and useful advocates of the Constitution. He was consulted by both Washington and Hamilton on questions of policy; and the latter relied greatly, in all his financial measures, on the knowledge and experience of Mr. Cabot. Reflection and temperament combined to make him the friend of strong government; and his own share in the early Federal measures caused him to cherish their policy, which was intended to lead to the form of

[1] Letters of John Adams to his Wife, II. 240.

government that he esteemed the best. Like Hamilton, he desired a government possessing both vigor and energy; and, though he believed an infusion of democracy essential, he thought a governing class likewise essential to the highest success. Bitterly opposed to all the doctrines of the French Revolution, his natural aversion to a pure democracy was thereby greatly increased. In the election of Jefferson he believed, and rightly, that the ascendancy of pure democratic theories was assured; and as he was convinced that this evil was radical, and not to be overcome by resistance, he felt that it must be left to work out its destiny with such modifications as were possible. These opinions made him lukewarm toward the aspirations of his more active friends, and reluctant to join in many of their schemes. He was naturally despondent; and he sincerely believed that no pure democracy could be long successful, or could sufficiently protect the rights of property and of the individual. He was disposed always to philosophize; and, as he felt sure he could not check the political forces whose action he dreaded, he was inclined, to use his own expression to Colonel Pickering, "to let the world ruin itself in its own way." I need hardly say that this apparent indifference arose from no want of definite or settled opinions. Beneath all the graciousness and repose of manner, there were the stiff convictions and the fixed principles which have ever marked the Puritan character. But Mr. Cabot's was a more liberal disposition than that of many of his New England countrymen; and his natural courtesy, coupled with his indolent temperament, kept him free from the bitter public controversies in which so many of his more ardent friends engaged. Not that Mr. Cabot feared a necessary conflict, but he desired no needless ones. Being in a quarrel, he bore it that the opposed might beware of him. Two instances occur among his letters, which illustrate this. His youngest brother had been very shamelessly and unjustly accused of unfair dealing in a business transaction. Mr. Cabot's advice, when applied to, was simple. "Go to your

accuser," said he; "obtain either a reiteration or a withdrawal of his charges: if he gives the latter, well and good; if the former, your course is plain." In the other case, Mr. Cabot was drawn into a controversy, which he did all in his power to avoid, with a third person by the determined aggressiveness of his friend Colonel Pickering. The question, unluckily, was one of veracity. Mr. Cabot published a brief note in the paper, and his opponent was silenced.

Mr. Cabot's great influence in the community is always referred to by his contemporaries. One instance shows the respect in which his character and judgment were held, even outside the bounds of his own State. A dispute involving a large amount arose between an insurer and a New York insurance company. The case was referred to Mr. Cabot, and I cannot learn that his decision was ever appealed from. But his influence in his own immediate circle was almost unbounded, At the time of his death, he was spoken of as "the Nestor, the wise, cool, considerate counsellor of most of the intelligent statesmen on the Federal side."[1] Nor was this less true apparently in matters of a more private nature. I am indebted to the Hon. George Bancroft for an anecdote which not only indicates the weight attached to Mr. Cabot's opinions, but is also illustrative of the power exercised by the leading men of the community at that time. Deference to recognized leaders may well be of interest in these days, when our most respectable journals glory in the fact that, though the wisest and best men leave a political party, no one follows them, and the party is not affected. Mr. Bancroft's story, however, is as follows: When he was a young man, and had just graduated from college, he was anxious to go to Germany, in order to finish his studies. A sojourn in Europe was then rare, and no light matter to be hastily decided. Mr. Bancroft's father took the question into careful consideration; and his first step was to seek Mr. Cabot, and ask his advice. Mr. Cabot approved the plan, and

[1] Daily Advertiser, April 24, 1823.

urged his friend to send his son abroad. Then Mr. Bancroft himself went to Quincy, and consulted John Adams. This adviser was equally decided (there was no Greek vagueness about the New England oracles), but his opinion was the direct contrary of Mr. Cabot's. "You had better stay at home," said Mr. Adams: "an American education is good enough for an American." The future historian was sent abroad to the University of Göttingen, and possibly some of the accomplishments which have graced his career may be attributed to Mr. Cabot's advice. But the story is of real value in illustrating a state of society which has now departed. It shows an intellectual domination exercised by a few leading men, which is utterly foreign to the present day. We may have done well to free ourselves from the control of individual opinion, but let us not too easily forget that a people without leaders is by no means a subject for rejoicing.

In the opening chapter, I have sketched those studies to which Mr. Cabot chiefly devoted himself. His commercial pursuits led him to a close investigation of all subjects connected with political economy; and he was considered, in his day, an authority in such matters. Politics and questions of government occupied him constantly, and afforded food for his thoughts both in reading and writing. He was versed in French and Spanish, and a fair Latin scholar, while metaphysics and the natural sciences always had for him great attractions. But he did not neglect lighter literature. Works upon the subjects I have mentioned composed the larger part of his small and well-selected library, but the English classics were also well represented. A complete edition of Swift, by its well-worn calf binding, attests the owner's fondness for that master of style and satire; while a once handsome copy of Fielding, "the prose Homer of England," bears indelible marks of constant reading. To a man devoted to such varied pursuits, the leisure of private life and the quiet of a library offered, of course, irresistible charms.

Bred in the Congregational Church of New England, Mr. Cabot was always a constant attendant upon religious services, and a firm supporter of the ecclesiastical institutions. But in these matters also he was liberal in his opinions, and in later life joined the Unitarian sect. He brought to religious matters the same spirit of conscientious investigation and careful thought that he did to all other questions; and, although a sincerely religious man in feeling, he was unable to satisfy his scepticism as to the divine revelation of Christianity. His letters to his friend and pastor, Dr. Kirkland, show how deeply he was concerned about these questions, as well as the admiration which he had for Christianity as a moral system. But he was never able to remove the doubts, of which he made no concealment, as to its supernatural origin.

Wise and patriotic in public affairs, respected by his friends, and beloved by his family, of high honor and unspotted integrity, Mr. Cabot left a memory which must ever be venerated by his descendants. I trust that I am not presumptuous when I express the hope that his life and character may be cherished among those which are held in honorable recollection by Massachusetts.

I cannot close this volume more fitly than with the words of New England's great orator: "And the mention of the father of my friend[1] brings to my mind the memory of his great colleague, the early associate of Hamilton and of Ames, trusted and beloved by Washington, consulted on all occasions connected with the administration of the finances, the establishment of the treasury department, the imposition of the first rates of duty, and with every thing that belonged to the commercial system of the United States, — George Cabot, of Massachusetts."[2]

[1] Mr. Goodhue.

[2] Speech of Daniel Webster at the dinner of the New England Society of New York, on the Landing at Plymouth, 1843, Webster's Works, II. 205

POLITICAL WRITINGS.

NOTE. — The following selections have been made from the many articles contributed by Mr. Cabot to the newspapers of the day. No small part of the influence exerted by the Federalists came from their constant use of the public prints as vehicles to inform and sway the public mind. A few examples serve as well as a complete collection to illustrate Mr. Cabot's style and mode of thought and expression; and I have not therefore thought it necessary to give a greater number of his political writings than could be certainly known and obtained with ease from references in his letters.

POLITICAL WRITINGS.

From the Columbian Centinel, April 15, 1797.

MR. RUSSELL, — Notwithstanding there are among us some who from various motives would acquiesce in our subjection to *France*, yet the number *so devoted to that nation* must be small; and the support they find from those who do not yet see their dangerous designs must daily diminish.

The American people know that their individual rights and liberties are so connected with the independence of the nation, that the loss of the latter must soon be followed by that of the former. It was on the broad and solid basis of this truth that our whole Revolution rested, and as long as the force of the sentiment is felt, and not much longer, shall we be truly free. It is in the American mind therefore we are to look for the security of our freedom. This is well known to the French, and hence it is that they persisted so long in attempting to corrupt, debauch, and cajole us before they resorted to violence and outrage; and hence it is that their instruments here, faithful to their masters, have labored incessantly to prove that their most wicked and atrocious acts are all justifiable.

Every one must know that *France* and *England*, whose rivalry is perpetually involving them in wars, would each desire to have an influence over our country which should render us subservient to its purposes; but their attempts to establish this influence, whether by fraud or by force, must be repelled at every hazard. And they always may be repelled with certainty, if we are faithful to ourselves. Our own means are sufficient for this, situated as we are, three thousand miles from the scene of their power; but, in addition to our own strength, we may always rely that either of them will co-operate with us against the other, whenever we need

it, — *not however from friendship to us*, BUT ON THE SURE PRINCIPLE OF THEIR OWN SAFETY OR INTEREST.

It is painful to see the endeavors of some men to persuade the people that the power of *France* is irresistible, and that she will make us feel her power, if we do not submit to her insolent demands. I trust, however, that the spirit of our country will not be so dismayed as to bend to a foreign master, especially in the present instance, where we already suffer almost as much injury as is in the power of the French to inflict. For, great as their power is, it is confined to the European territory, and is chiefly supported by plunder; and, if we consider the immense sums swindled from the *Americans* under the mask of friendship, it may be doubted whether we *should* have lost more by professed war than we *have* lost in a perfidious peace.

But notwithstanding the immense depredations France commits on our property, and the insults she offers to our government, she has no disposition to declare war. On the contrary, it is well known that she has been encouraged to proceed thus far by the hope of intimidating us; and there is good reason to believe that she will cease to injure us *at that point where she finds us determined to repel*. When she perceives that our government will not betray the country, nor the people destroy their own government, she will desist from hostilities and swear she is our friend.

A FREE AMERICAN.

From the Columbian Centinel, May 3, 1797.

POLITICAL THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT CRISIS.

Addressed to those who truly love our Country: —

There are those who imagine that France would receive an envoy extraordinary, although she refuses to receive a minister plenipotentiary from the United States; and there are many who believe she would cordially receive Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Madison in any diplomatic character. If either of these opinions is correct, it must be because the conduct of the United States would in that case discover a willingness to pass under the Gallic yoke, and because the Directory must so understand it. The Directory knows full well that four years' practice of sedition and conspiracy by Genet and his followers, and the immense robberies and plunderings of our merchants by the agents of France, aggravated by the

contemptuous treatment of the American nation, in the person of Mr. Pinckney, constitute a mass of outrages and insult such as no people would long submit to, who mean to maintain their rights, their interests, or their honor. The Directory knows full well that the hypocrisy which for a moment concealed the wicked designs of France will no longer answer that purpose. The imposture is fully detected in every country; and every individual not blinded by party passions now sees that the principal object aimed at by France, from the commencement of the Republic, has been and still is to establish a permanent dominion over other nations. But in this project of universal national tyranny she can never succeed, while England remains mistress of the ocean. "England must be destroyed then," say the French, that the ambition of France may have its full scope. But how is the destruction of England to be achieved? Not by force, for she conquers all her enemies upon the sea; not by intrigues with her subjects, for rebels and traitors are made there with difficulty, although in other countries, called free, French emissaries and French gold have done wonders. It is then only by ruining the commerce of the whole world, which indirectly sustains British credit, the only prop of their power, that England can be thrown down. Such is the opinion of France, and, though extremely futile, is one of the reasons why she assails the commerce of the neutral nations. I call this opinion futile, because experience has proved that nations may become formidable and destructive to others, as well as more miserable among themselves, after the dissolution of order and public credit than they were before.

England under the tyranny of *Cromwell* was the terror of her neighbors, as *France*, now inexpressibly wretched and enslaved, is the scourge or dread of all the civilized world.

But it will be asked, must we make war upon France? I answer, *No*. War might be just, but is not expedient: it is a great calamity, and should always be avoided, *except when necessary to prevent a greater evil than itself*. The evil with which we are threatened, it is true, is of this kind, but probably may be guarded against without war. France intends to subject us to her government, if she can; but her measures will always depend upon her calculations of success. She began with an attempt to seduce us; but, the arts of seduction having failed, she changed her caresses and flatteries into reproaches and threats, and, finding these in-

effectual, she is now endeavoring to intimidate us by acts of hostility, declaring at the same time that these acts are not to be understood as amounting to a "*rupture*," which she wishes to avoid; that is to say, she wishes to try the experiment of seduction, menaces, and force upon our country without avowing war, and, if neither of those, nor all of them combined, will make us yield our independence, she will then see that she has been deceived by those profligate men whose information she has trusted, and will swear in future to be our sincere friend.

Such is the view of our affairs to the eyes of enlightened men, and from it may be learned the plain course which ought to be taken. Effectual provision should be made for the protection and defence of our country and the people's rights. Nothing *offensive* toward the French Republic should be authorized by our government; but it should be made manifest by our preparations for events that we know the designs of France, and have a keen sense of the injuries she has already done us, and that having at all times performed toward her every act which reason, justice, the remembrance of former friendship, and the love of peace can demand of us, WE CANNOT DO MORE, AND WILL NEVER CONSENT TO BE GOVERNED BY A FOREIGN NATION. This spirit of independence, supported by the perfect rectitude of our cause, if exhibited by the National Legislature, will animate the breast of every lover of true liberty within the *United States*, and will dissipate those clouds which have so long darkened our political sky. *France* will then abandon an enterprise which promises her no advantage, for she will then see *that we are not intimidated;* and she must know that, WHILE UNITED AT HOME, WE CAN NEVER BE CONQUERED.

FORTITER IN RE.

From the Columbian Centinel, May 31, 1797.

[The Independence of the *United States* was *first* declared on the 4th of July, 1776. Who could have imagined that in 1797 our rights as a Sovereign State would be denied by *France?* History will record the fact that *France* has been willing to see us independent of *Britain, but not independent of herself.*]

MR. RUSSELL. — There is no candid man who, after a fair examination of the documents[1] which are published, can doubt

[1] The documents referred to are those which accompanied the President's message on May 13, 1797, and which gave an account of the failure of

that the conduct of our government towards all the nations at war has been just and impartial as far as was in its power; and that whatever partialities have unavoidably existed have been all in favor of France. But, notwithstanding this truth is demonstrated, yet the atrocious designs of France against the United States can no longer be denied even by party men; for she already executes them wherever her power extends, and in her national acts manifests openly the disposition, too long concealed, *to make us a dependent people.* It is not enough that she robs us of millions of our hard-earned property, to feed the spirit of rapine which supports her tyranny. It is not enough that she swears to annihilate our commerce, and the commerce of all the world, in order that she may impoverish a rival; but, in addition to these unparalleled outrages upon the rights of men and of nations, *she avows the nefarious policy of separating the people of the United States from the free and just government which they themselves have instituted.* It is thus she would ally us more nearly to herself by introducing into our happy country *that spirit of licentiousness* which has produced, as its natural offspring, every species of crime, cruelty, perfidy, and injustice among the French, and WHICH I FEAR WILL ULTIMATELY ESTABLISH AN IRON THRONE ON THE SEPULCHRE OF LIBERTY.

But it will be asked, "What can encourage France to such a bold attempt as the disorganization and subjugation of our country, after she herself had witnessed our persevering efforts for independence?" To this question, every well-informed man will readily answer, "It is because France has been led to believe that she has a party in the United States to support her pretensions more powerful than Britain had in 1775." Such undoubtedly is the calculation of the French Directory; and it is not to be expected that they will relinquish their enterprises until they are convinced that this calculation is grossly erroneous, and *that the American people will defend their rights against the usurpation of all foreign masters.* Whether even this conviction will discourage France in the midst of her victories must be doubtful in the mind of every man who knows the nature of her designs and the insatiableness of those passions from which they proceed. But, be this as it may, at this interesting moment, when a foreign nation is

Pinckney's first negotiation, and of the insults to which he had been subjected.

actually taking hostile steps *upon the presumption that we are a divided people*, is it not a sacred duty to unite, and is it not the dictate of wisdom to *show* that we *are* united? Every lover of his country will agree that it is, and will rejoice that the approaching session of our State Legislature affords an early opportunity of joining their voice with that of *the President* and Congress of the United States, to proclaim to the world that we have been misrepresented or misunderstood; "that we are *not* a degraded people, humiliated under a colonial spirit of fear and sense of inferiority, fitted to be the miserable instruments of foreign influence, and regardless of national honor, character, and interest," but that we know our rights and will maintain them, our duties and will fulfil them, and that, while we scrupulously perform towards others every thing that justice requires from us, we can never abandon the rightful claim of justice from them.

ONE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

From the Massachusetts Mercury, Jan. 12, 1798.

MESSRS. YOUNG AND MINNS, — The truly independent spirit of your paper encourages the hope that you will afford a place in the "Mercury" for the following observations of one who thinks himself "A SINCERE LOVER OF HIS COUNTRY."

Portugal is threatened with the Jacobin yoke.* Spain trembles at the foresight of a similar destiny. Should these events happen, the two nations will become the natural allies of the Great Horde, and their spoils may subsist them for another year.

Belgium has been gleaned, and can yield nothing more until the return of industry shall prepare a new crop. Holland, drained of one hundred millions in money, its commerce annihilated and fleet vanquished, offers nothing but a dejected people, emaciated by hunger and desperate from suffering, who wish for death as a refuge from their misery. Austria, though compelled to accept a respite on hard terms, is yet too strong to be plundered and too wise to be duped.

Italy is probably appropriated to Buonaparte, and nothing can

[* Spain may be considered as subject to France, since the treaty made by the Prince of Peace; but, to pass under the Jacobin yoke, its government must be subverted, and a set of cut-throats and desperadoes must reign without control.] — G. C.

be drawn from it without his consent. Buonaparte is an Italian, and a large portion of his troops are also Italians. It is too soon yet for the development of all his designs; but, as he has shown much more genius and talents than any other actor on the Revolutionary scene, it is presumable that he will achieve the object of his ambition, if he is not impeded by the dagger or bowl from the hand of a rival. It is contrary to all fair reasoning to expect that the superiority of this Italian can be forgiven by the French Jacobins.

In France, it is well known that a very large majority of the people wish for monarchy; but four hundred thousand soldiers, deeply interested in their own despotism, carrying terror on the bayonet point, and two hundred thousand spies employed by the tyrants, silence every tongue. The people everywhere are disarmed, and therefore must continue in the same wretched slavery until the discord or destruction of their masters shall open the way for their escape. It is not necessary to believe that Hoche was poisoned, in order to account for the honors done to his *manes*. Hoche had not the talents of Cæsar or Cromwell, and the Directory might as well fear several others as him; but the public spectacle exhibited at Hoche's funeral was a homage to the army, which it was proper and politic for the State to pay, when the government became in fact wholly military.

England is again menaced with an army of French *sans-culottes*, professedly to subvert the British Constitution, and to establish in its stead the power of a banditti of ruffians; but how this army is to be transported across the channel is a secret which the projectors are too prudent to disclose. It is believed that the navies of France, and the nations she has subjugated, if all assembled, would not now be a match for the British fleet; and yet this fleet must be completely overcome before an invasion can be successful. Perhaps it may appear hereafter that the stinging mortification at De Winter's defeat, and the necessity of perpetually agitating the minds of the troops, have given birth to this gasconade. But, however this may be, England has nothing to fear from the undertaking; while the threat must open the purses of Englishmen of every party, must facilitate the operations of the minister, and must give additional force and stability to the government.

The commissioners of conciliation from the United States sent to France to accommodate differences, it is said, will return *re infecta*. This is credible; for those who have done to others the

most atrocious injuries are generally implacable. This disappointment of our desires, however, can be none to the expectations of well-informed men, and will create no new uneasiness in the breast of those who equally dread and detest foreign influence of every kind. To such men, it will occur as an obvious truth that, whatever may be the disposition of the present government of France, her final conduct toward the United States will depend upon our apparent weakness or strength, and her own actual condition and power at the end of her conflict with England. It has been shown to the American people by authentic proofs that from the first moment of our intercourse with France she intended absolutely to govern the counsels and direct the measures and force of our nation, so as to render us completely dependent on her. It has been seen and sorely felt that this intention has been pursued with redoubled efforts since the establishment of the Republic. Every art of seduction has been used, and sedition has been frequently excited, till at last we are the witnesses of avowed hostility everywhere exercised against our unoffending merchants, while in the bosom of our country venal presses and a faction in government distract public opinion and enfeeble the spirit of national defence. But although the ultimate measures of France toward us will depend on their future condition, yet the success under Providence will wholly depend on ourselves. Five millions of people, just to all the world, and determined to be free, if united, are not likely to be attacked, and surely they can never be conquered.

From the Massachusetts Mercury, Jan. 16, 1798.

Political Monitor. No. I.

Experience and observation every day teach us to believe that those men who are *outrageously* patriotic in their professions are generally actuated by some criminal selfishness, and would sacrifice the public welfare to their own avarice or ambition.

The same truth is inculcated by the writers of ancient history, who inform us that in old times the demagogues were zealous advocates for the most popular forms of government, *because under such forms they could easily exercise all the powers of the State without any responsibilities.*

In *Athens*, the most democratic of the Grecian republics, Demos-

THENES and PHOCION were the only leaders who refused the gold of PHILIP. Those two men were such as are now called Aristocrats: they were lovers of liberty and the best friends of the people. but they hated their vices and would not flatter them, *while all the demagogues without exception were the pensioners of a foreign nation which was then taking measures to enslave their country.*

In *Rome*, it is well known that the tribunes and other democratic leaders were so scandalously venal as to induce one who bribed them to say "*that Rome would sell herself whenever a purchaser should appear.*"

The minister of the French republic has officially informed his government that in the *United States he* has found "PATRIOTS whose consciences already have their prices, and that the proof of this will remain for ever in the archives of *France.*" This grievous charge is not to be denied, nor that the seductive power of French gold has been equally pernicious among every people who have been weak enough to think them their friends. But, while Mr. Fauchet's letter makes us blush for our country, it ought always to be recollected who are the men he calls patriots.

It were devoutly to be wished that France would disclose to us the names of all, as she has occasionally of *some*, of our citizens whose assistance she relies on to establish her power over us. Such a disclosure would be very precious in the eye of every independent American, who reads too plainly in the miseries of the Hollanders the *cruel destiny* which *France* had prepared for the people of the *United States*, and which it is well known nothing but a want of power prevented her from inflicting years ago.

From the Massachusetts Mercury, Jan. 19, 1798.

MESSRS. YOUNG AND MINNS, — If it is essential to the preservation of our rights that *just sentiments should prevail* on subjects that relate to liberty, a faint outline of Jacobinism may be profitably sketched to excite reflection.

POLITICAL MONITOR. No. II.

Whatever diversity of opinion may have once existed concerning the real principle of the French Revolution, it has long since been demonstrated to be that same lust of domination and plunder which has so often scourged the human race in every period of its history.

These turbulent passions, rendered formidable by a union with talents, were chiefly concentrated in a body of men who, from the place of their meeting, were called Jacobins, and from them the system of their operations has been justly termed Jacobinism. Among the first members of this famous society, there were a few who felt some little restraint of religion, morality, or honor, and some whose property seemed to give them an interest in the public welfare; but all these were forcibly swept away, that the society might be enabled to act with *perfect freedom*, and with what was then called *republican energy*. But, however desperate those men were who remained, they and their successors have displayed great abilities, and have steadily pursued the same daring designs. As they possessed neither power nor property, their inordinate desires made them the determined enemies of all who possessed either. They saw the nation embarrassed by the errors and vices of a bad government; but, instead of co-operating with those good citizens who aimed at liberty and order, they boldly resolved to take advantage of the public distress, and *raise themselves to greatness on the ruins of their country*. From the first moment of their acting in public affairs, *they have invariably aspired to establish their own absolute power over France, and the absolute power of France over other nations*. In the first of these designs, their success is complete. After the solemn mockery of three constitutions and twelve revolutions, which pretended to have liberty for their object, but which in fact have been only the changes of tyranny, the people of *France* see that every epoch in their affairs makes a new rivet added to their own chains, till at length, sunk with their weight, they are all ready to abandon the hope of relief. While this dreadful despotism has thus established itself over all France, it has been no less occupied in seeking connections, alliances, and dominions in other countries. The conductors of the Revolution knew that in every society, however well governed, there were many discontented spirits of their own class, who would rise at their call and whose services they could always command. Men of lost character and broken fortune, disappointed seekers of office, rapacious men, idle profligates and desperadoes of all descriptions, were the natural members of their body; and to these may be added the *disciples* which are made among the unwary poor, who are seduced by the *fallacious* promise of *plenty without labor;* and finally many credulous citizens, whose honest, but uninformed zeal for public happiness makes them the easy dupes of those who promise it.

To excite, combine, and organize these various descriptions of persons in every country, and to give them activity in opposition to its government, has been and still continues to be the unremitting endeavor of Jacobinism; and this new species of mischief, which its wickedness has devised, is more dangerous to all civilized society, and more destructive than all its poison, daggers, guillotines, and bayonets. Successful Jacobinism is the consummation of vice and tyranny, and therefore to be viewed as the greatest possible political evil; and it is justly to be feared, because it is propagated by eloquence and sophistry, and is exhibited in the garb of virtue and of liberty, whose sacred names it profanely usurps. It enjoys, too, the aid of the purse and the sword of the French Republic. In a word, Jacobinism is what the committee of the French Convention emphatically pronounced it: "A concert of means to establish (everywhere) the empire of death, of terror, and of crime."[1]

From the Massachusetts Mercury, Jan. 26, 1798.

POLITICAL MONITOR. No. III.

Strictures on Fauchet's Pamphlet.

Mr. Fauchet renews against the *United States* the groundless charges of violation or inexecution of the treaties which bind us to *France*. For the particular facts, he refers his readers to the letter of MR. PICKERING to MR. PINCKNEY, which has been justly considered by all fair reasoners as a complete refutation of all those charges. It would seem indeed that MR. FAUCHET himself is not quite satisfied with the solidity of the claims and complaints heretofore made by *France*, for he now reminds us of our guarantee of the French possessions in *America*, which, he says, we are bound to fulfil. This demand his predecessor, GENET, with all his eagerness to embarrass the government, never thought it prudent to press; doubtless from a conviction that the untenableness of the claim would weaken his party and strengthen that of the government. They knew that *France* was the aggressor in every sense, and had voluntarily declared war against *England;* and that therefore our treaty, *which is purely defensive*, did not

[1] [See report of committee of eleven who framed the last French Constitution.] — G. C.

oblige us to take a part. This idea, simple and obvious, is sufficient to explain to reasonable men why *France* has been so quiet on this point, while she has been so violent on others that were frivolous. MR. FAUCHET regrets extremely that the Revolutionary government has acknowledged the insincerity and perfidy of monarchical *France* toward the *United States*. It is probable that the inconvenience of this exposure has since been felt by all those who have been endeavoring to cajole us. To recover the confidence of the *American* people, thus lost, he insists that, in the treaty of 1778, *France* displayed an improvidence for herself *or an excessive good-will for us*. Nothing could be more unseasonable than this stale pretension, set up now, four years after its falsehood has been proved by the best possible testimony. All the world may see the declarations made by the Revolutionary government, while in possession of the evidence; and which were in substance *that the interference of the old Court, and the aid they gave us, resulted wholly from motives base, perfidious, and treacherous, and that they were uniformly hostile to the prosperity of the United States*. But, while Mr. Fauchet laments the indiscretion of those tell-tales who have disclosed the *secret views* of his nation, *he* is not wholly free from the same imputation. He exemplifies, in his own conduct, the true French maxim which he lays down, "that neither government nor individuals regulate their measures agreeably to the outward forms of correspondence." This contradiction of the actions of the French to what they profess has perplexed many good people in *America*. We have often been charmed with what they were *saying*, till seized with horror at what they were *doing*. This minister came to the *United States* professedly to erase the impressions and repair the injuries which we felt from GENET; but it is believed the same atrocious designs were still pursued, *only with a little more secrecy*. With great affectation of respect for our violated rights, Mr. Fauchet publicly recalled the commissions which Genet had given to American traitors; but he designed to use the instruments of sedition which were prepared. *And, if the coffers had not been emptied, there can be no doubt we should have seen an armed force in the bosom of our country, supported by France, to overawe our government:* but the million of dollars brought over by *Genet*, and the proceeds of the *East India* ships, were gone. All disappeared on FAUCHET'S arrival; so that with truth he might say to RANDOLPH and

others that he could not comply with their demands for money. He could only command a few dollars to be distributed among *journalists*, whose services were necessary, *and could be had at a very low rate.*

From the Massachusetts Mercury, Jan. 30, 1798.

Political Monitor. No. IV.

Strictures on Fauchet's Pamphlet.

In order to understand the policy of *France*, as it relates to maritime affairs, it is necessary always to keep in our eye the object at which she aims. This object undoubtedly is the destruction of the naval power of *England*, for it is *England* alone that prevents *France* from establishing the same absolute empire on the sea which she now exercises over many nations by land. The effect of such an accumulation of power in any nation, upon the rights and independence of others, need not be described; and God grant that it may never be known!

Mr. Fauchet, after noticing the maxim of the law of nations, by which enemy property in neutral bottoms is liable to seizure, proceeds to observe that the interest of neutrals, and of those belligerents who were too weak to protect their own commerce, equally suffered by this principle; and therefore these two descriptions of powers have usually engaged in their treaties to respect each other's flag, so far as to let the property of an enemy pass unmolested when sailing under it. This *treaty privilege* he denominates "modern neutrality." *France*, he tells us, has defended this new principle with more warmth than any other power; and he cites one example where she has made it the means of pushing a neutral nation into a war. We are well acquainted with this fact, and perhaps contributed something toward its occurrence, with a view to our own benefit; but we all see and lament that, in its consequences, it has enfeebled the nation to whom it happened, and finally has made them slaves of *France*.

Mr. Fauchet's disclosure of the motives for such active zeal among the French to enforce the *new doctrine* cannot fail to be instructive to the people of the United States; and, if duly considered, must prove to us incontestably *that our own benefit makes no part of its design.*

However desirable it may be to see it admitted as a part of the law of nations "that free bottoms shall make free goods," it is to be feared that those nations, single or combined, against whom the principle would operate, will always resist its establishment, and, even if a number of powers should unite to support it, that there could be no safe reliance on the permanency of such an union. This idea is justified by the history of the armed neutrality and the constitution of man and of society. Mr. Fauchet, however, affirms *boldly* "that *France* has faithfully maintained their modern neutrality;" but it remains for Mr. Fauchet or his partisans to reconcile this declaration with the truth. For he *must* know, as all the world has seen, *that in contempt of this principle, and in contempt of all treaty obligations, France, in May,* 1793, *did pass a law authorizing the seizure of all neutral vessels with enemy property on board,* and that her cruisers have at all times captured all such vessels and many others, and have often accompanied these acts with circumstances of extreme cruelty and flagrant abuse.

In a subsequent paragraph, Mr. Fauchet still further explains the use *France* proposes to make of her agreements with particular States respecting enemy property in neutral ships. At the time of making these stipulations, they necessarily are considered by each party with a sole reference to their own interest, and, when made, their obligation cannot by any construction be extended to their respective intercourse with others. Let it be shown, then, that in our treaty with *France* we have engaged that the principle of "free bottoms making free goods" should be admitted into our subsequent treaties with *England* or other powers. No man will be hardy enough to contend that our treaty with *France* contains any such stipulations: on the contrary, it will appear, upon reading it, that both parties were left perfectly free, each to consult its own interest. Yet, because we have presumed to use this freedom in a manner which our interest required, *France* insolently talks of punishing us as if we were her colonists. She tells us plainly that she plunders us, because we have not done something by the use of which she could have forced us into a war with *England*, as she did the Hollanders in 1780.

It would be incredible that, at a time when the French have nothing effectual to oppose to the growing superiority of the British naval forces, they should be so impolitic as to avow to us their imperious and unjust designs; but a solution of this problem is to be

found in the wicked *mis*-representations which *France* has received of the character of the government and people of the *United States*. It is certain that the French have been taught to believe that the *United States* were so blindly devoted to their cause that they might rely upon our acquiescence to every measure they should adopt, as fully as if we were their subjects, and that, if the judicial government should incline to oppose them, the spirit of the people would bear down upon the government. This infamous libel against our country has been too much countenanced by the temper of a considerable party in the Federal House of Representatives, and the feeble means of the Legislature.

If instead of exhibiting a submissive spirit, which invites insult and encourages injury, the Legislature had unitedly discovered those elevated and patriotic sentiments which the President expressed in his speech in June last, we should probably have heard of no new outrages or indignities from France, and some of the present embarrassments would have been alleviated. We pray that the errors of the past time may suffice, and that in future party spirit may yield to the public good. We hope for measures always just, *but firm*, — free from insolence, *but free also from servility*. Such measures will be always acceptable to men who truly love their country, and who mean to defend it against all the assaults of tyranny.

From the Massachusetts Mercury, Feb. 2, 1798.

Political Monitor. No. V.

Strictures on Fauchet's Pamphlet concluded.

The complete refutation which Mr. Pickering has given to all the calumnies against our government *openly* propagated by the French seems to render superfluous any further argument on the subject; but, as the partisans of *France* have hitherto justified *all her outrages*, it may be useful to remark that Mr. Fauchet, the Minister of the Decemvirs, admits that the conduct of Genet and the French consuls was culpable. He admits, too, the folly and ignorance of the Directory in decreeing that French cruisers should treat neutrals as these suffer others to treat them. Doubtless, he is aware of the sentence which impartiality must pronounce on this act. He perceives that it was intended to let loose all the

robbers and pirates that were in the dominions of *France*, to plunder the *unarmed* commerce of *friendly* nations. He admits also that this wanton injustice is succeeded by a subsequent decree, as explained by MERLIN, now a member of the Directory, and which he says must be prejudicial to the French cause, &c. In all this there is nothing new, and yet the confession is very *precious*, because it comes from a great offender, and authorizes us to expect that, if ever justice revives in *France*, these unprovoked aggressions will be condemned by the nation.

Having made these acknowledgments, Mr. Fauchet then asks whether *France* has not been eager to redress our grievances when we have made them known? It is true that the Robespierrian party, having destroyed their rivals, the Brissotins, did, at the request of the *United States*, displace GENET, who was a creature of that party, but it should be remembered *they sent a successor*. He asks also if the committee of public safety of the second and third year did not respect our neutrality? To this it may be safely answered that in NO YEAR of the *Republic has France respected our neutrality*. It is presumed that Mr. Fauchet cannot adduce *one example* in which a French cruiser meeting with enemy property in an American ship has complied with the treaty of 1778. If there have been any such cases, they are very few, and must be lost in comparison with the fifteen or twenty millions of dollars which have been ravished from our honest industry. The next question of Mr. Fauchet, alluding to the intercourse between the Directory and their *avowed friend* Monroe, is a cruel insult to those whose interests were depending. Unhappily for the *United States*, this man always mistook the interest of *France* for the interest of his own country, as he does Jacobin tyranny for rational liberty. Educated by JEFFERSON, he believes that the abominable system kept up in *France* in the name of Republicanism ought to be naturalized and cherished in the *United States*, and that we, with the wretched slaves of *France*, ought to be one people.

Having criminated the conduct of the UNITED STATES, Mr. Fauchet undertakes to account for our apostasy by saying that, after the exile of FAYETTE and the murder of the king, the Revolution was viewed with a less favorable eye by WASHINGTON, and that all those persons whose reputation and services might give them influence with him had joined and encouraged his

hostile disposition. From this general description, however, he excepted JEFFERSON, the MOULTRIES, LIVINGSTONS, CLINTON, and SAMUEL ADAMS. It is not proper absolutely to deny the truth of this explanation, since it is not wholly unfounded. It is well known that the first news of a proposed reform in the French government was heard in every country with pleasure and delight by all good men; but it is also known that long before the murder of the king every statesman in *Europe* and *America* saw, *and every honest one deplored*, that the liberty and happiness of the French people were to be sacrificed to the lawless ambition of their Jacobin leaders. This sentiment was every day confirmed by new events, and, having become common to the upright and enlightened everywhere, would have soon prevailed among all classes of people, if there had not been in every community some men who were interested to counteract it. Whether the men named by Mr. Fauchet were of this description, the country will judge. And let them also judge whether WASHINGTON, who supports and is supported by the wise and good, ought not to have abandoned those who were engaged in the universal destruction of liberty and order.

From the Columbian Centinel, Oct. 4, 1800.

MR. RUSSELL, — Those who are accustomed to observe the course of diplomatic affairs, and the "skill" practised by the French in their intercourse with other nations, will not be surprised at the elaborate and insidious article on the subject of our envoys, which is taken from a *Paris* paper.

Those who recollect the fulminations of Mr. Adet at the period of our last Presidential election, *when terror was the order of the day*, will not wonder at the *sweet* expressions of respect toward our envoys, *now the system of terror is suspended and the old system of intrigue resumed.*

But this same paper, which would encourage us to believe that the differences between the two countries will be soon removed, tells us pretty plainly that *France* will insist upon the same provision respecting ships-of-war, privateers, and prizes as is contained in Mr. Jay's treaty, although it is supposed that no such provision can be made on our part without a violation of our faith. But I would inquire upon what ground France will support this extraordinary demand. She will not say to the *American people*, whom

she often addresses, "You had no right to make this stipulation." This has never been said, I believe, *even to the populace.* Will she say, "This stipulation impaired the right of *France* as secured by former treaties"? This cannot be said with truth. For the same article in Mr. Jay's treaty which contains the stipulation expressly provides *that it shall not operate contrary to former existing treaties.* Will she allege that the *United States* first broke the treaty of 1778, which secured to *France* the stipulation which she now wishes to make? Every page of the Revolutionary history must confute this; and her legislative records will prove that she authorized the violation of that treaty from May, 1793, so that our own law of July 7, 1798, is little else than a declaration of the effects flowing from the violations of *France.* Will the French government say that a sense of propriety or justice to their citizens forbids them to make a treaty with us which does not put them on the same footing with the English? If this were correct, all treaties should be alike; whereas it is sufficient that they are fair, equal, and reciprocal between the parties, or such as they shall esteem so. Have the French chosen to forget that previous to the treaty of Mr. Jay, and afterward until the annulment of the French treaty was declared by Congress, *England* was in the same predicament in relation to the point in question that *France* is now? And yet *England* was ready to make an equitable and amicable adjustment of all differences, without complaining of this stipulation existing between us and *France.*

It will be seen by all who are not wilfully blind that the conduct of the *United States* has been perfectly natural, honest, and fair in the whole of this proceeding, and that the complaint of *France* is without any good reason. In 1778, when we apprehended danger from the power and the hostile disposition of *England,* we reciprocated with *France,* among other things, a certain exclusive stipulation relative to maritime rights, which was thought suitable to the interests and views of both the parties. In 1794, we stipulated in a similar manner with *England,* but provided against the operation of it toward those who had prior rights secured by treaty. *France* chose, however, to break the treaty by which she held this prior right, and of consequence her right ceased. If this is inconvenient or injurious, she must blame her own conduct, and not that of the *United States.* Doubtless, the consequence was foreseen; but it was vainly believed in *France*

that they could reap the double advantage of keeping us bound and being free themselves, and whatever should be wanting of justice should be amply made up by intrigue or by force.

ONE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

From the Columbian Centinel, Oct. 11, 1800.

MR. RUSSELL, — Among the judicious comments with which you accompanied the publication of the *Paris* article respecting our envoys, I was rejoiced to see that you considered the proposition relative to neutral bottoms as a mere "*lullaby.*" It is, indeed, unfortunate that, on a subject of such moment to the *United States*, so much has been at different times addressed to our passions and so little to our understanding, and that our enemies still cherish the belief that we will sacrifice our most substantial interests to our vanity, pride, or *mistaken* avarice.

The vexation and oppression which the commerce of neutrals is liable to suffer from belligerent nations will never be essentially mitigated until adequate means are mutually agreed on to satisfy the latter that the property of their enemies is not covered. This can only be done by particular stipulations between nation and nation. Although it may be difficult by convention to secure to belligerents and neutrals the full and free exercise of all the rights they respectively claim, yet, if there is a sincere disposition in the parties, all may be secured that are important, and that can be reasonably insisted on. But when will this salutary arrangement take place, if the neutrals themselves do not promote it, but enter into the absurd projects of one of the war parties against the other? A moment's reflection would satisfy any unprejudiced mind that *France*, while inferior to *England* in maritime force, will never be reconciled to any system respecting neutrals which cannot be made *a shield for her own commerce* in a time of war with that power. While, on the contrary, every system convertible to such a purpose will certainly be opposed by *England*, or by any *predominant* maritime power, since to every such power this system might, and sometimes would, be more injurious than the arms of the neutral in open war. It is time to put an end to the delusions which have already beguiled us to the very edge of a dangerous precipice. It is a proof of the contempt which the French feel for

those whom they address that they repeat these stale tricks, and still expect to be believed when they profess respect for the rights of nations, for they know and are proud of the distinction. Since the period when imperial *Rome* lorded it over enslaved nations, no people so insultingly, outrageously, and cruelly tyrannized over others as the French. They admit no rights but those of the sword. It is too plain, therefore, to be mistaken by any but the wilfully blind that all the doctrines and dogmas of the French relative to free bottoms, &c., are vile artifices practised on the neutrals, to engage them against a nation whom, if they could conquer or destroy, they could then hope for the consummation of their wishes in the conquest of the rest of the world.

ONE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

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